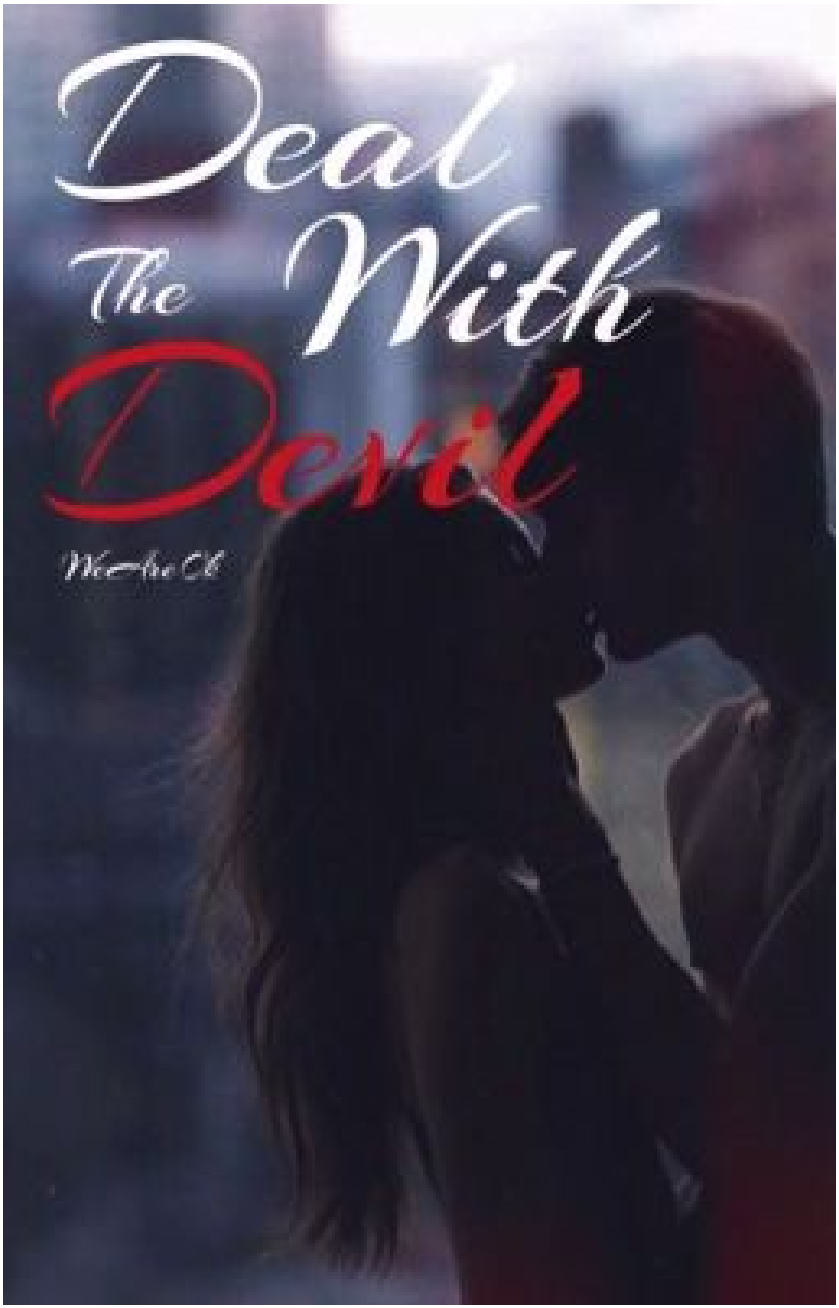
Deal
The With
Devil

Deal With the Devil | ✔

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Chapter One

I was nervous to say the least. I hadn't seen my mother since I was thirteen, that was ten years ago. Ten years without the person most people would say is the most important in your life. A mother is supposed to care and love you always.

What a joke that is.

I've been living with my father and his wonderful wife, Nora, who I'd consider more of a mom than my own. But unfortunately fate didn't have my best interest in mind. My mother needed me and for the first time, I needed her.

My father recently had gotten very ill, lung cancer, stage two. He wasn't rich in money, but growing up I and my step sister, Julia, had the best childhood. Both him and Nora made up for the lack of funds in love and precious memories.

My mother, on the other hand, was extremely wealthy. She left my father all those years ago for a man that could only satisfy her with things. In fact, she married the richest man in New York who was known for being ruthless. Dimitri Sterling.

The name itself was enough to run the other way.

But the one thing they couldn't buy was me.

Until now.

Mother needed me for publicity, she said and I quote, "The world will eat it up at our reunion!"

I, of course, denied. But she offered to fully pay for my fathers medical bills and get him the best treatment.

How could I deny the chance to give my father's life back?

Here I sat in a luxurious limo my mother had gotten for me to pick me up from the airport. My hands were folded in my lap as I twirled my thumbs around each other. A habit I've had most of my life.

I felt my legs stick to the slick leather. Even the blasting air condition couldn't cool my nerves.

It's summer in New York and I knew enough from watching Gossip Girl that it was beyond humid. My home is in Arizona, where warm is never an issue, but humidity didn't exist.

I'd only been to her house once. She invited me to Christmas when I was thirteen. I went and regretted it immediately. We spent no time together once we arrived back from whatever Christmas

ball we had attended that night. Mother used me to look like the perfect family.

She has one child with Dimitri who is my half brother. His name is a Collin, he's a clone of his father I swear. Collin is only four, so I couldn't have ill feelings toward him... *yet*.

"Ms. Rivera," the driver spoke, looking back at me through the mirror. "we've arrived."

I nodded and grabbed onto my purse about to open my door, but someone had beat me to it. I got out of the car and thanked the man who had opened my door.

The house- well, mansion- looked the same. Beautiful, gigantic, and cold. Nothing about this house had any character. It was perfect, in the worst way. The only thing that calmed my nerves as I walked up the stoned stairway to the door was the loud rush of the water fountain behind me.

I knocked only once before the door opened yet again for me. I walked in, the bags in my hands were quickly taken from me.

I am definitely not at home anymore.

The clicking of my shoes echoed with each step. The interior was absolutely beautiful. It hadn't changed at all in those years since I'd been here. Not a single item was out of place.

"Darling!" I looked up to see my mother at the top of the grand staircase, smiling down. The house might not have changed, but she has. Not even botox could hide getting older. She stood in front of me, ten years she hadn't reached out. That's all I could think about when I saw her face. We looked so much alike. I had her thick brown hair that fell in soft waves naturally. Around eyes were almond shaped and our lips full. "We have a gala to attend tonight, your gown you will wear is hung up in your room." *My room*? I thought. I didn't have a room here, this wasn't my home.

She didn't even care enough to catch up on the last ten years of my life. So much has changed. I'd gone to college, finished college, nearly started a career if it weren't for my father getting sick. But no, we didn't talk about anything because I was just another business deal to her. A pawn in her game.

"Where is that exactly?" I asked.

Her surprised expression got me annoyed. "Oh, you don't remember?" She asked.

I resisted the temptation to roll my eyes. Obviously I didn't remember otherwise I wouldn't be asking. "No,"

"Milly!" She called out.

I did remember Milly. She was my mother's oldest housekeeper. She'd been around since my mother and Dimitri got married. I was fond of her, Milly was always nice to me as a child even if I only

met her that one when I stayed for a week. Occasionally I'd get pictures sent to my house of my little brother and she was the one who sent them to me.

Milly approached us, looking the same. She was older years ago and luckily she didn't look like she'd aged anymore. "Ms. Sterling," she greeted.

"Milly, how are you?" I warmly greeted, pulling her in for a hug.

"Oh, I'm good, Ms. Rivera." She said, surprised at my greeting, but nonetheless hugged me back.

I pulled away to see my mother looking uncomfortable. *G*ood. "Would you show me where I'm staying?" I asked her, knowing my mother would have just demanded it.

Milly nodded. "Did you need anything, Ms. Sterling?"

Mother shook her head before Milly took me up the stairs and to my room.

She opened the door for me, revealing the bedroom which was much bigger than I remembered. Everything was neutral colors. White, beige, grey... of course it was just another beautiful room. It had everything you'd need. Furniture, walk-in closet, balcony, bathroom. This was nearly the size of half of my house back home. "Fresh towels in the bathroom, would you be needing anything else?"

I turned and gave a small smile, shaking my head. "No, Milly, thank you for everything." I said and she shut the door as she left.

I walked over to the bed and flopped back on it, staring at the high ceiling. What have I gotten myself into?

Groaning, I sit back up and walk to the closet where the dress I'm wearing was hung up. It was red and looked to be form fitting but was also strapless. I picked it up to see it had a slit cut out to show my leg.

There was a knock on my door before it was pushed open by a blonde woman. "Hi! I'm Patty, your stylist for tonight." *My world really has been flipped upside down...*

Three hours later Patty had finished and I looked beautiful. I didn't want to sound vain, but she had seriously worked some magic because I hardly recognized myself. My hair was in big voluminous curls. My makeup was flawless and you'd couldn't see a single blemish.

I put on the dress and truly felt like a princess. I couldn't believe that this is the world my mother had been living in for years. I've only been here for a few hours and it was all overwhelming.

Another knock came from the door and I opened it to see my mother. She looked beautiful as well, as always. "Wear these," She said, opening the box to reveal a set of beautiful diamond earrings

and matching necklace.

"N-no, that's too much." I said, scared I'd lose one.

She shook her head. "Anastasia, these are your grandmothers, I'm not giving them to you, but they'd make for a perfect cover story. People magazine will be there tonight." And she ruined the moment.

My face drew blank, not knowing to respond. She took my hand and placed the box in it before walking away.

This is her game.

Chapter Two

"Diana, I didn't know you had a daughter." One of the too many people we've talked to tonight said. It was like a never ending sea of stuck up people. Each one shocked that Diana herself had another child. She of course milked the whole situation into a tragically beautiful story about our separation.

Gag.

But I played nice and went along with whatever she said. In fact, I don't think I actually spoke one word.

"I'm going to use the rest room." I said, stepping away, but she caught my arm, a fake smile still on her face.

"Come right back,"

I took my arm from her grip and quickly walked out. I found the ladies room and locked the stall. This place was so huge each stall had a freaking couch in it! That couldn't be sanitary, but I sat on it anyway, trying to calm down.

I wanted to calm my dad but I knew how much it was stress him out. I took my phone that I had stuffed in my bra and dialed Julia. There wasn't anyone in here luckily.

"Hello?" She answered almost immediately.

"Julia, thank god, I'm going to go crazy."

"Ana? Are you okay?" She asked, sounding alarmed.

No. "Yes, I... I just needed to talk to someone from home." I said, all of a sudden feeling home sick. I've traveled before and for periods at a time, but this was different.

Julia sighed, something she did when didn't know what to do. "It's going to be okay," her voice was calming.

"How's dad?" I asked.

"Same as he was this morning," she answered.

Right I just saw him earlier today before I left...

I laughed lightly. "Sorry, I'm just worried."

"We all are, but he's going to get the help he needs. Because of you," her last words were encouraging.

I heard the door opened and mentally cursed. "I've got to go, but I'll call you soon." I whispered and then hung up.

I walked out of the stall and washed my hands before returning out to the main area. I opened the door and as I began putting my phone back I slammed into someone.

"Oh, I'm so sorry-" I looked up to see no one other than Dimitri.

"Anastasia," He said my name with distaste. I knew he didn't like me, he never had. This was the first time I'd seen him since I arrived.

"Dimitri," I said with the same tone.

"Your mother is looking for you." He said.

"I told her I'd be right back."

He mumbled something under his breath before walking away.

I shook off the exchange and made my way back in to the gala. Everyone had taken their seats and when I arrived at the table I took my seat between my mother and some other man.

"Where have you been?" My mother hissed under her breath as I sat down.

"Bathroom," was all I said. I wasn't one to keep my mouth shut usually, but I needed to keep my end of the bargain for her to keep hers.

"Diana, who is this?" I looked over to see the mans eyes looking between mother and I. He was very handsome and almost rugged looking with the slight stubble on his face. His chocolate brown hair was tousled in the most stylish way and his brown eyes almost had a golden tone to them.

But I didn't like how he asked about me as if I wasn't sitting right here.

"*I'm* Anastasia," I introduced myself, not waiting for my mother to tell the sob story of our reunion.

His sharp gaze focused solely on me as I spoke. "Alexander," He said.

"This is my daughter," Mother spoke up. "she'll be staying with me over the summer." *Unfortunately*.

"Anastasia, tell Alexander here about our wonderful reunion." She batted her eyelashes at me in a way that said I should defy her.

"I don't think he wants to hear that right now." I muttered, trying to keep a smile.

"Maybe you can tell me over dinner one night?" Alexander said, making me look over to him.

Is this man, basically a stranger, asking me on a date?

"She'd love to," mother accepts for me.

I look between the two of them and shake my head. "No, trust me it's a long story-"

"Ok then we'll have dinner twice this week."He said with a smug smile.

I narrowed my eyes at him. Who does he think he is?

Before I could protest any further, the speaker on stage spoke announcing the charities they are sponsoring.

"A date night for two at the lovely La Grenouille restaurant. Let's start the bid for ten thousand." I nearly spit my water out.

Ten thousand dollars for a reservation for a restaurant?!

"Ten thousand!" A man shouted from a cross the room.

"Ten thousand to this gentlemen, do I hear eleven?"

"Eleven!"

It went on and on until the bidding had gotten up to sixteen thousand dollars.

Oh to be rich...

"Twenty thousand dollars," I looked over to see Alexander with his arm raised and shooting me a smirk.

"Twenty thousand! Going once... going twice... sold to Alexander Knight." The crowd clapped for him.

Wait.

Alexander Knight.

He's...

Dimitri's biggest competition and youngest CEO of New York.

At twenty seven he managed to take over his father's company and do something with it that not even his father could. It was a multi billion dollar company that seemed far too much for some his age could handle, but he did anyway. Not only is he known for that but also being New York's most eligible bachelor.

Pft, eligible my ass.

This guy is probably a walking STD.

"I hope you like French cuisines." Alexander said with a smirk.

I groaned over the sounds of clapping.

The rest of the evening went by slowly with many other auctions happening and rich people talking about uninteresting things.

It was no doubt nearly everyone there was attractive, but everyone I'd talked to had the personality of a door knob.

The morning after the gala I had to be up early, which I was dreading. If I hate anything it's mornings. I wish everyone started their days after one o clock.

I got up and put on a simple navy blue sundress. It was hot today so I stuck with minimal makeup and keeping my hair in its natural wavy state.

I went downstairs and to the kitchen. Roberto, the in-home chef, was cooking the most delicious breakfast. My eyes lit up at the site of bacon.

I nearly moaned as I took a bite. How could anyone hate bacon? One things for sure is that I could never be a vegetarian.

"Oh good, you're awake." I turn to see my mother walk into the kitchen. "Come with me," she said.

Not feeling like arguing, I followed behind her and walked into

an office looking room. There Dimitri was sitting at his desk and no one other than Alexander Knight was sitting across from him.

"Ana, you remember-"

"Anastasia," I corrected.

Mother furrowed her eyebrows in confusion. "What?"

"You may call me Anastasia." I clarified. Only people I was close to, *or at least liked*, were allowed to call me any type of nickname.

She looked taken back by my words, but nonetheless kept talking. "Anastasia, Alexander here has proposed a deal that we simply can not turn down."

I raised an eyebrow. "And that is?" Looking between them all with my arms crossed.

"I want you to come live with me." Alexander spoke.

My eyes went wide. "Are you stupid?"

"Anastasia!" My mother scolded.

"What? I'm serious, I genuinely want to know if you people are actually stupid." I said, dumbfounded that he'd even offer I lived with him. *A complete stranger!*

"Damn it can you take anything seriously?" Dimitri gritted out, as if he knows me.

"Enough," Diana said, stopping this argument. *For now*.

"I will *not* live with you." I said, my tone as serious as possible.

Alexander got up from the seat and stood a couple feet away. He towered over me, something I hadn't realized yesterday since I was wearing six inch heels. He had to be 6'6 at least.

"The alliance between Sterling Enterprises and Knight Corporations would be one to reckon with. It would put both of us at the top of not only New York, but the country, and further opening opportunities outside of the USA." Alexander began explaining, but all I could focus on was the living with him part. "If we just merge other companies would get the same idea, potentially knocking both of our statuses. So that's where you come into the picture."

"How is me living with you going to solve anything?"

He took a small step forward and his eyes on me. "We would be getting married,"

My mouth fell open. "You are crazy!" I yelled out. *Marriage?!* Why on earth would we need to be married. "This makes no sense." I said, almost to myself.

"We need a reason to merge companies. You, being the daughter of Dimitri-"

"Step daughter," I made sure to clarify. I wouldn't want anyone thinking I was actually related to that monster.

"Step daughter," he fixed his mistake. "It would make perfect

sense. We get married, merge our companies, and that's it. The press will eat it up and we'll have people begging at our knees." He said with a hopeful look. "We can divorce-"

"I don't even like these people!" I exclaimed, gesturing to the woman I legally had to call my mother and her ugly husband. "Why would you think I'd marry someone just like them?" He visibly winced at my words. "I came here for one purpose-"

"Your father," Alexander said.

He knows.

"How do you know about him?" I looked at him and then back at my mother.

"Anastasia, if you don't accept his offer then our deal is off." Diana threatened.

Panic.

I felt panicked.

Helpless.

When it came to my father how could I say no? I mean, if we get divorced then what's the big deal? I would be saving my father's life, something I knew I'd do anything.

"I hate you," I said to her. I thought I saw hurt flash through her eyes, but that woman is stone cold. The botox wasn't the only thing that made her motionless. It was her stone cold heart. "How long?" I asked Alexander. I can't believe I was actually considering this... but what other choice was I left with?

"One year," He said.

"One year?" Its only a year...

He nodded.

"I want it written down. *Everything*, I need a contract in front of me to ensure my father will get the help he needs." I said.

"Of course," Alexander said.

Moments later a contract was written up and I was handed a pen by Alexander. I read over it numerous times, making sure everything was the way we agreed on.

I scribbled my signature at the bottom, truly feeling like I had just made a deal with the devil.

Chapter Three

I repacked my bags and went downstairs with the fairly large suitcases. At the end of the stairway was Alexander, mother, and Dimitri. I hadn't even gotten a chance to see Collin since he was attending summer camp for the week.

"Let me get those for you, Ms. Rivera." One of the many butlers said as he took my bags.

I pressed my tongue to the top of my mouth to try and stop any tears that threatened to fall. "Can we go?" I snapped, not making eye contact with any of them.

"Of course," Alexander's smooth voice said. I knew he was looking at me, but I continued avoiding his gaze and just followed beside him out the door.

"Thank you, Anastasia." I heard my mother say.

I ignored her knowing I'd say something I shouldn't. Not that I'd regret it.

A man opened the door to the large black SUV and I got in, sliding all the way over. Alexander got in and was seated closer to me than I would have liked.

The car ride was quiet and awkward. It wasn't too long of a drive, maybe twenty minutes. I watched out the tinted window as the large buildings flew by. New York City was ugly. I loved cities, but this one was too big. It reminded me of the colors brown and gray. You could smell the stench from garbage as we passed certain areas. I never wanted to be home so badly.

Moments later we pulled into what looked like a hotel. As we stopped I was about to open my door, but Alexander quickly reached over to me and held my hand in his.

I turned my face to shoot him a glare, but was taken back by how close he was to me.

"Do not open that door," his tone serious.

I raised an eyebrow, challenging him.

"There will be paparazzi outside so stay close." He instructed and before I knew it, his door was open revealing many flashes of cameras going off. I didn't have a chance to take it in because Alexander had grasped my hand in his yet again and pulled me from the car.

"Alexander!"

"Mr. Knight, over here!"

"Who's this with you?!"

The questions were asked one after the other as they continued taking pictures.

Alexander's hand let go of mine but was placed on the small of my back as he lead my through the people and into the building. Two other men followed us into the elevator and I assumed they were bodyguards for Alexander.

The elevator stopped at the 21st floor and when the doors opened it revealed a lavish looking pent house. It was bigger than my house alone. Across from me were windows, floor to ceiling, revealing the skyline of the city. I couldn't deny that from this view New York actually was *pretty*.

"Whoa," I couldn't help but breathe out. "I can't believe you live in this building."

He chuckled. "I *own* this building." Surprise, surprise. "Let me show you to your room." He said, once again placing his hand at the small of my back.

I reached behind me and held his wrist to take it off my back. He just glanced down at me, amusement clearly in his eyes. "No touching," I said sternly.

With a smirk he raised his hands in defense. "No touching," he agreed.

I followed him up the beautiful staircase and down the hall. He opened the door and get another beautiful room was in front of me. This was smaller than my mother's, but the view was beyond words. You could see past the city and the ocean. It was something out of a dream.

"Anything you may need I, or my housekeeper, Mrs. Stone, would be more than happy to get for you." Alexander said, his tone was warm. It was refreshing from all the people I'd met in the last 24 hours.

I couldn't help but feel a slight bit of guilt for how rude I'd been to him.

But that guilt quickly slipped away as I remembered the deal we just made. The original deal was for me to just stay the summer with Diana. Because of him I'd be here much longer than I wanted.

"Ok," was all I said. I met his gaze to see that he'd been looking at me with heated eyes. I shifted uncomfortable and pulled my dress down slightly. "Alexander?"

He blinked, obviously in a daze. "I'll be in my office if you need me." And with that he shut the door.

My phone went off and I looked down to see it was my best friend, Kayla. I quickly answered, relieved to hear someone

familiar. "Hello?"

"Annie! How is everything?" She asked, probably already knowing I wasn't having a good time. Kayla knew me like the back of her hand.

"Well... I'm... married?" I said and for a moment I thought the line had gone dead. "Kayla-"

"You're what?!" She exclaimed.

I let out a deep sigh and fell back onto the bed. "I have to," I further explained the situations, with many interruptions from Kayla calling my mother not so nice things. "And that's how I've ended up here."

"You haven't even been there a full two days." She said in disbelief.

I snorted. "Tell me about it,"

"What are your parents going to think?" She said, referring to Nora as my actual parent. She was and growing up I did occasionally call her 'mom'.

"I'm not going to tell them."

"That's unavoidable considering you're already on the TV."

"On the what?!" I freaked out.

"ABC News, go look!"

I scrambled to find the remote for the large TV that was mounted to the wall above the dresser. I finally turned it on and switched the channel to the news. "Oh. My. God." There I was. With Alexander moving through the photographers. They used the most unflattering photo of me though. I look like a scared animal!

"Love the dress," she commented, trying to make me feel better.

"Oh, no, no, no, no, this can not be happening." I groaned, continuing to watch the coverage.

I turned up the volume slightly to hear what the anchor had to say.

"Well looks to me that New York's hottest bachelor is no longer on the market. Alexander Knight was earlier spotted with a woman going into his building. Follow us on Twitter for more updates on the story."

"These people are nuts!" I said before turning the TV off. "I'm not even interesting!" Everyone will probably think I'm a gold digger!

She laughed. "Well now you are."

I talked with Kayla for a couple hours on the phone and hung up when a knock came from the door.

"Come in," I called out.

The door opened and Alexander walked in. "Hungry?"

My stomach rumbled. "No," truth is was that I didn't want to eat with Alexander. I had no interest in making any effort towards

actually getting to know him.

He gave me a pointed look. "Your stomach says otherwise."

I rolled my eyes. "Fine;" I muttered.

He looked satisfied as I followed him down the stairs and into the kitchen. To my surprise there was a pizza waiting on the counter.

"Pizza?" I questioned.

"You don't like pizza?" He questioned.

"I love pizza, but I didn't think someone like you would order one. I thought you'd have something made for you like steak."

He chuckled, grabbing two plates from the cabinet behind him. "Sorry to disappoint," he said, handing me the dish.

I grabbed a slice and bit into it. *Yum*. Maybe pizza in New York is better...

"So about the marriage," and I lost my appetite. "I know this a lot on you so how about we just say we're engaged for now." He offered, not making me feel any better.

"Or how about we don't get married at all?" I offered, fluttering my eyelashes at him and smiling.

Alexander sighed and raked a hand through his hair, his muscles showing through his white dress shirt. No doubt he was a handsome guy, in fact I'd even say he looked like some Greek god. "We could get married tomorrow-"

"Nope, engaged is fine for now." I protested, taking the second offer.

He nodded and took another bite of pizza, leaving sauce of the top of his chin and a spot on what was his crisp white shirt.

"You got," I pointed to my chin to indicate where the sauce was on his.

"What?" He asked with furrowed eyebrows.

I laughed and grabbed a napkin, reaching over the counter to wipe the sauce off. "For a business man you're quite a messy eater."

He groaned as he looked down at the stain.

"Maybe you should start wearing bibs," I joked.

He looked up at me with narrowed eyes, but I could tell he was amused by the comment.

After dinner I went back up to my room, tired for no reason considering I didn't do much of anything. I kept the curtains opened so I could see the moon high above the city buildings. The sounds from below causing me slowly to fall asleep.

Chapter Four

I'd been here a week and was bored out of my mind. Alexander wouldn't let me go anywhere without him and when we did leave it was only to his office building where I'd sit around and do nothing. I missed working and going out after. I felt like a true prisoner.

Though it was nice not having to see my mother and her ugly husband. This situation is far from ideal, but at least I wouldn't have to spend time with them.

I ate dinner with him every night now and though I'd never let him know, I didn't hate him *as much.* He'd been nothing but nice since I came to live with him. We didn't have many conversations, but the ones we did were pleasant. I learned only a couple things about him. One being is that he is *very* messy eater and he also loved Motown music. He always had it playing through the penthouse. Another thing is that he was a terrible singer.

I was sat on the sofa in Alexander's office. He was busy going through paper work.

The door open and in walked a blonde woman, who was very pretty. She looked to be nervous though by the furrow in her eyebrows.

Alexander's eyes snapped up to her, jaw hard. "You're late, *again*."

"I'm sorry, sir-"

"You're fired," he said, looking back down at the papers.

Her eyes went wide. "No, Alexander-"

"Mr. Knight," he corrected her. "Leave."

She did as he asked, shutting the door behind her.

"That was a little dramatic." I commented.

He looked over at me and shrugged. "I don't have time for assistants that don't take their jobs seriously."

An idea popped in my head.

"I could be your assistant." I offered.

He raised an eyebrow. "You're going to be my wife," he said, causing me to cringe. "you don't need to work."

I stood and walked over to his desk. He leaned back in his chair as if to look at me better. "I want to work, Alexander. I'm bored and no offense, but you are *very* boring."

This made him smirk. "I am anything but boring, sweetheart."

My nose scrunched from the nickname.

"Have you ever worked as an assistant before?"

I shook my head. "No, but I've had several jobs and even a degree in public relations." I boasted, proud of my own accomplishment. I worked damn hard for that degree.

He nodded. "I didn't know you had a degree."

I rolled my eyes. "Yes because you don't know me."

He smirked. "Okay, Anastasia," my name rolled off his tongue. There's no denying that this man's voice was heaven. "you'll start... now."

I smiled in victory. "What do you need done, Mr. Knight?"

Four hours later and I had organized his filing cabinet completely, booked future appointments, and even got his damn coffee. The previous assistant he had appeared to not have done anything because everything was a mess.

"Anastasia," I looked up to see my mother approach the desk that Alexander had given me outside his office.

I furrowed my eyebrows. "What are you doing here?" I asked her.

"Alexander invited us to lunch." I looked to see Dimitri approaching, his usual facial expression. This man looked like someone had just killed his mother. "We'll bring you leftovers." She said, sending me a vindictive smile.

I narrowed my eyes at her, about to give her a piece of my mind until another voice cut me off.

"That won't be necessary since Anastasia will be joining us." Alexander said from behind me. I looked over at him and he flashed me a handsome smile. "Shall we?" He reached his hand down for me to grab but I stood up on my own and walked past him.

I was actually grateful, and surprised, that Alexander stood up for me to my mother like that. I know I wasn't able to talk to her in a rude way since she could potentially take the deal back with my father.

We exited from the parking garage below the building to avoid any paparazzi. I got into the black SUV with Alexander sliding beside me. I was glad my mother and Dimitri decided to ride in their own vehicle.

I looked out the window like usual. "Thank you," I muttered quietly to Alexander.

"For what?" He asked, clearly confused.

I turned towards him. "Saying what you did earlier. My mother... well to put it nicely, she's a bitch."

He chuckled and nodded. "For the next year, we're a team." His words made my heart skip a beat, but I dismissed the feeling.

You're a pawn in their game.

My thoughts snapped me back into reality. I nodded and turned

away from him again.

Soon we pulled up to the restaurant and quickly exited the vehicle when the driver opened the door for us. We were seated on a roof top of the building, it was gorgeous. Lights were strung around and it reminded me of a greenhouse with all the different types of plants and flowers.

They all began discussing different business ideas and strategies. It caught my attention when they brought up the engagement.

"Who should we tell first? I think on the cover of Vogue would be a wonderful announcement." Mother gushed.

I groaned and Alexander looked down at me with concern in his eyes. "No," he said to her.

Mother rolled her eyes. "Well how else would you do it?" *This woman is a snake.*

Alexander shrugged. "People will know soon enough, Diana. We don't have to do it right away." He said, annoyance in his voice. I was yet again surprised by him.

"Knight, this was your idea." Dimitri said, looking between the two of us. I don't think there's ever been a moment where I've seen that man happy. His face held a permanent frown and narrowed eyes.

"I'm aware, Dimitri. All I'm saying is that Anastasia was thrown into all of this so suddenly and I do not think it is necessary to put her through anymore. We will take it as slow as possible." Alexander's voice was serious as he narrowed his eyes at Dimitri.

I don't know why Alexander was being so nice to me, but I wasn't complaining. It was a relief. I know it was his idea, but I truly felt like he didn't have bad intentions. Even if I was just being used, I was using them too. My father's treatment would begin in a couple days and as soon as all this was over I'd be able to go home again.

After lunch instead of going back to work we arrived back at his house. I looked over at him with furrowed eyebrows.

"I thought we could take the rest of the day off." He said, his eyes looked down at mine, almost as if he were searching for something.

I just nodded and averted my gaze elsewhere before following him out of the car and into the building. The elevator ride was quiet, but this time not awkward.

"Anastasia," He said as we walked into his home. "I still have that reservation from the auction." He said sheepishly with a smirk.

I give a pointed look with an eyebrow raised and my arms crossed. "Yes, *you* do and I can't even imagine your list of woman that would absolutely *love* to go with you." I said with a smile of my own.

His smirk didn't falter. "I don't think that'd look too good

considering people will soon know we're getting married."

I narrowed my eyes at him, he knows I hate when he brings that up or uses it against me. "You're infuriating," I told him.

Alexander just shrugged cooly, clearly amused with himself. "Tonight at 7?"

I rolled my eyes. "If I go to dinner with you once will you never ask again?"

He chuckled. "Never take my wife on a date? You're a strange woman, Anastasia." *Oh, he thinks he's funny.*

"Infuriating!" I yelled at him before going up the stairs.

"I'll have a dress sent up to you!" He called from downstairs.

Chapter Five

I put on the black cocktail dress Alexander had gotten for me. It fit like a glove, hugging in the right places. It was form fitting, but in a classy way. It hit right above my knee, fitting like a pencil skirt to show off the curves of my body. It was off the shoulder so it wrapped around my shoulders, showing all of my neck and collarbone.

I stepped into a pair of black heels that I already owned. I only wore them once and that was to an office Christmas party I had at my job back home. They lifted me up another four inches, making me considerably tall. I was already 5'6 to begin with. My hair I'd curled and I applied my makeup.

I wasn't going to get as dressed up as I was, but I wanted to do it for myself. If I was going to live here then I'd better look the part.

But I underestimated these heels and the amount of stairs Alexander had.

I groaned nearly with each step, praying to god I didn't fall.

When I got to the bottom I cheered silently in victory.

"Yes... yes, no that will not be happening." Alexander walked into the room, talking on the phone with someone. He began pacing the living room, pinching the bridge of his nose. "Dammit- can anyone do anything when I'm not there?!" He growled out.

The sound of my shoes on the hardwood floor had his eyes snap up to me. Alexander looked at me from head to toe, eyes darkening by the second. "I have to go, fix this." He said to the person on the other line, not taking his eyes off me. "You look beautiful,"

I blushed. I actually blushed. "Thanks," I mumbled awkwardly.

He walked over to me with his signature smirk. "Ready?"

I shrugged. "As I'll ever be,"

He went to reach around my to put his arm around my waist, but I quickly stepped out of his grip and glared. "Sorry, *no* touching," he knew exactly what he was doing by the smug look on his face.

We got off the elevator and stepped into the lobby. I could see photographers from here standing outside just waiting for Alexander to come out.

"It's going to fine, Ana." He comforted me as if he sensed I was nervous. I didn't mind him using my nickname, by the cost of this dress I guess I really shouldn't complain what he calls me.

I looked up and offered a small smile as a 'thank you'.

I stood between him and George, his hulk of a bodyguard. The doors opened and the flashes went off a longer with the dozen questions they were shouting out did they really expect anyone to answer like this?

"Who's this flavor of the night?" One photographer called out, referring to me.

I resisted the urge to punch this man straight in his face. How could someone be so disrespectful?

As the door opened i got into the vehicle as quickly as I could in heels. George got into the drivers side and sped off the curb.

"Are you okay?" Alexander asked.

"I'm not very fond of being referred to as a 'flavor' or a 'slut'." I snapped, not meaning to direct my anger at him. I looked over at him and noticed his jaw hard. "I'm fine," I said, hoping that would make him less tense.

"Paparazzi are pigs. Don't ever let them get to your head, that's what they want." He said.

Sooner than later we pulled up to the restaurant and walked in, Alexander was nearly pressed into my side as we walked together. As we approached the table he pulled my chair out for me before taking his own seat.

The waitress came and handed us our menus and a glasses of red wine, her eyes lingering on Alexander, but he hadn't noticed.

"Can I get you anything else, Mr. Knight?" She asked, trying to sound seductive.

Alexander didn't even bother looking up from the menu as he shook his head. Her face fell slightly from the lack of attention he didn't give her and she walked away.

"At least look at the poor girl, Alexander." I said, slightly amused at the exchange.

He looked up at me with a smirk. "First you don't want me to take you on dates and now you want me to flirt with other girls? What kind of wife are you?"

I couldn't help but laugh at that. He loved getting a reaction out of me so I thought I'd surprise him with a different one. "I'm like your wingman,"

He snorted. "I don't need a wingman." I loved getting a reaction out of him, I guess we had that in common.

I shrugged, taking a sip of whatever the type of wine the waitress had poured. "Oh, clearly. You just force them into marriage as blackmail." I didn't mean to snap at him, but i guess it was just the pent up anger I had in the back of my mind.

He slightly winced at that one, but his facial expression turned

soft. "Anastasia-"

"Lets just forget I said that." I insisted, now looking down at the menu.

But it was in French.

I glanced back up at him to see he hadn't taken his eyes away from me. I raised an eyebrow, silently questioning his stare.

"Do you read French?" I asked him.

He nodded. "I do, I am French actually. My parents were both born and raised in France." He said. *Another fact about him.*

"Well you know this type of food better than me. I'll get what you're having."

He nodded. "Escargot as an appetizer?"

I shrugged. "What is that?"

He smirked. "You'll see,"

Alexander had ordered and a little while later a dish was brought back and was placed on the table. The waitress lifted the metal lid revealing the appetizer.

My eyes went wide.

"Are those..."

He nodded and laughed. "Yup,"

Snails.

I'm going to be sick.

"I'm not eating that." I said, one of the phrases that I rarely said. I wasn't a picky eater, but snails?!

He pouted his lip out, looking ridiculously cute. "Please, just one."

I curled my lip in disgust. "Ew, no."

He smiled. "You're being childish."

"Because I won't eat a snail?"

He nodded. "They're delicious," And with that he lifted the snail shell to his lips and ate the poor little snail.

"You're gross,"

He used his hand to stifle a laugh. "Now I'm gross?" He asked, amused.

I nodded. "Yes,"

His smirk returned. "I'm far from gross, sweetheart."

I rolled my eyes. "Don't call me that," I said, but my tone wasn't serious.

He took a sip of his wine, not breaking eye contact with me. "You're a very interesting woman, Anastasia."

I raised an eyebrow, challenging him. "How so?" I was genuinely curious.

But before he could answer the waitress brought our dinner and placed it in front of us. When she revealed what was under the lid I nearly sighed in relief at the normal looking pasta dish.

I took a bite and felt as if my taste buds were having an orgasm. I moaned from how good it was. "This is delicious," I said, taking another bite.

"Please reframe from making those noises, Anastasia." He said, his voice low.

I looked up at him with a raised eyebrow and mouth full of pasta. "Hmm?" I hummed, attempting to swallow to bite I took. My eyes are bigger than my stomach and I always take too much.

His heated gaze turned into amusement as he chuckled. "This next year will be very interesting." He said almost as if he was talking to himself.

I swallowed and shot him a toothy grin. "You brought it upon yourself."

He nodded. "That, I did,"

After dinner we entered the car again and I was thankful the air conditioning was on. It was nearly ten o clock and still very humid.

"Do you want to go for a drink?" Alexander asked me.

"A drink? Like a bar?" I asked him, surprised. That didn't seem like his scene.

He shrugged. "Club or bar,"

Did I really want to spend any more time with this guy?

I shook my head. "Maybe another night." I declined, mainly because I was actually tired.

He nodded. "Another night,"

We arrived back at his home and I immediately took off my heels. I thought my feet were going to fall off if I had them on for another second. I let a breath out of relief when I stood barefoot.

"I'm going to finish some things in my office. Don't hesitate to get me if you something." Alexander said.

"It's almost eleven, what could you possibly working on?" I asked him.

"Work never stops when you run a company as big as mine." He said.

I nodded. "I'm going to sleep, goodnight." I walked up the stairs, but stopped half way and turned back to him. "Thank you for dinner, Alexander."

He gave me a small smile. "Any time, Anastasia." and with that he walked away and I went up to the bedroom.

Chapter Six

Alexander's phone calls were never ending this morning. The phone rang at least twelve times even within the last half hour. I continued making appointments for him and scheduling different meetings. He was busy himself with other sets of phone calls. There was a meeting we'd both be attending in a few minutes as soon as he finished his current call.

I managed to do all this all while getting him coffee and even his dry cleaning. He told me I didn't have to do that for him, but I wanted the full job and not special treatment.

Alexander exited his office looking flustered and stressed. "Are you ready?" He asked me, not looking up from his phone.

"Yes," I gathered the file and few papers I needed. I stood from the desk and tripped over my own two feet.

I prepared for the landing, but it never came. Arms wrapped around me and brought me into his chest. My now empty hands landed flat on his chest. I had never been this close to him before and he was intoxicating. His smell alone was enough to drive any woman crazy.

I awkwardly cleared my throat and took a step back. "Um, thank you." I mumbled. He looked at me with those same cloudy eyes I'd seen before that made my cheeks blush. I averted my eyes away from him and quickly gathered the papers that fell.

He had the same idea because we both bent down and ended up bumping heads. I fell back on my behind, holding my forehead.

He started laughing, what a beautiful sound.

What am I saying?!

"Let's just leave for the day." He said to me, we're still sitting on the ground.

I blinked. "What? No you have to go to this meeting." I said, amused.

He stood up and offered me a hand which I actually took and he helped me up. I adjusted the pencil skirt and held the rest of the papers to my chest since there were so many. He let out a jagged sigh. "Ready to die from boredom?"

I laughed. "I've been spending all my time with you, I can handle a meeting." I teased.

He playfully narrowed his eyes. "You're lucky I like you." He said

before walking away.

I shook my head, I think I was actually beginning to like him too.

I followed Alexander into the meeting room where several men were seated at a long mahogany table. He took a seat at the head of the table and I took the seat next to him.

"Gentlemen," he greeted.

I took notes throughout the meeting and Alexander was right. I *nearly* did die from boredom. The whole things dragged on for three whole hours. Everyone had eventually left the room, leaving him and I.

I slumped back into the chair, my head going back against the rest. "That was awful," I groaned.

He chuckled, swiveling in his chair to face me. "That wasn't even as bad as usual."

I scoffed. "I quit,"

He shrugged. "You could,"

Shaking my head, I readjusted my self in the chair so I was sitting up. I rested my elbows on the table, hands folded as I rested my chin on top. "Nah, then I'll *really* die of boredom."

"Did I tell you about the gala this weekend?" He asked me.

I shook my head waiting for him to go on.

"It's another fundraiser type of event. We'll be attending and..."

I eyed him curiously. "And?"

"We'll be announcing our engagement."

I groaned. "Why can't it be like a quiet engagement?"

"The whole point of us getting engaged is for the public to see." He reminded.

I was upset about having to get married, but I often wondered if he was as well. Not only will our marriage be public, but our divorce. Everyone would know considering after the year of being together I'd just move back to Arizona.

My phone buzzed and I looked down to see it was Nora. I smiled down at the name, excited to hear from her. "Hello?" I answered happily. Alexander gave me a look like he wondered who I was talking to.

"Hi, sweetie, how are things?" Nora's sweet voice asked me.

"Oh you know..." I said, not really wanting to go into detail since Alexander was right there. Plus I hadn't gotten a chance to explain everything that was really going on. All I've told her is that anything thing that happens here in New York, I didn't want my dad knowing. He didn't need any extra stress. "How's dad?" I asked, changing the subject.

"Treatment starts tomorrow. You don't know how grateful he is for you, Annie. We all are," she gushed. We talked for a few more

minutes before we ended the phone call.

She filled me in on what I've missed the past week or so. Julia is starting a new job soon as a hair stylist. College was never really her thing, but she'd always been amazing at hair and even makeup.

"Who was that?" Alexander asked me.

"Nora, my step mother." I said.

"Is everything alright with your father?" He asked. It made me feel good that he asked about him. No one had since I'd been here and that was the whole point of this trip.

I sighed. "No, not really, but with this treatment hopefully he will be." I said, trying to keep as much hope as possible.

He nodded. "I wanted to tell you I'm sorry." His words caught me by surprise. "I wish the circumstances were different and this wasn't the reason you had to be here."

I offered him a small smile. "Thank you, Alex, really."

He had a smile of his own. "Alex? I haven't been called that since I was in high school."

I shrugged. "Alexander is too long," I jokingly complained.

He scoffed. "I could say the same for Anastasia."

"Then call me Ana." I said to him, surprised at myself.

We finished the long day of work and went back to Alexander's home. When we arrived he went into his office as he usually does after he comes home from work.

I went upstairs but decided to explore a little bit. The hallway had four doors, mine being one of them. I went down a bit a opened the door across from mine. When I opened it, it revealed a large room that had shelves as tall as the ceiling filled with books. I felt like I stepped into the scene from Beauty and the Beast.

How could just an apartment be so big?!

There was seating arranged in the middle of the room. I loved reading so this was like a dream. I walked up to the bookcase, running my fingers along all of the books as I continued walking.

I noticed he had the entire collection of classic novels. Anything from Jane Austen to Charles Dickens, he had it.

I heard footsteps coming from the stairs so I quickly excited the room, shutting the lights off and door behind me.

I turned and ran into Alexander. "Are you alright?" He asked me, looking concerned.

I nodded. "Yes, fine."

He raised a questioning eyebrow, but dropped it back down. "Okay, well are you hungry?"

I was about to shake my head, but he spoke. "And don't say you're not, you haven't eaten since breakfast."

Now I raised a questioning eyebrow. "Keeping tabs on me?"

He shrugged. "Just looking out for my *wife*." He said with a teasing smile.

I groaned and walked past him to the stairs. He was really going to milk this marriage thing.

I sat at on the stool and leaned my elbows on the kitchen counter. "Cook for me, servant." I joked earning a laugh from him.

"What can I get for you, *master*?" He also joked with a smirk. *That damn smirk.*

I tapped my chin in mock thought. "Hmm," I hummed. "Grilled cheese,"

"Grilled cheese it is," He said as he turned to collect everything from the cabinets and fridge.

He took out the pan from one of the cabinets and began heating in the stove top. I noticed that he wasn't wearing his usual dress shirt and slacks. Alex wore a pair of jeans and a regular T-shirt. I'd never seen him so casual before.

"Do you need any help?" I offered, attempting to distract myself from gawking at the man.

His back still turned to me, he shook his head and continued cooking.

I rolled my eyes even though he couldn't see me. I got up and went over to him, ignoring his glances. I took the piece of bread and began buttering it.

"You're not doing it right." Alexander said with a stressful look on his face.

I couldn't help but laugh. "There's not a wrong way to butter a piece of bread."

He nodded. "Yes there is, you're doing it right now." I lifted the piece of bread up and the knife, spreading the butter slowly to mock him. He playfully narrowed his eyes and I smirked at him, taking a step back. "Give me the bread," he said, reaching for it.

I shook my head and laughed harder. The sight of a very tall man stalking towards me for a piece of bread truly was a comical sight.

But before I knew it I had backed up until my butt hit the counter, trapping me in. He was close to me, close enough to reach.

He had a smirk, leaning in, dipping his head down so his breath fanned the side of my face. "I always get what I want," is all he said before swiftly taking the bread and knife. He pulled back, looking smug and turned to go back to the stove.

I don't even have a comeback because of how cloudy he's made my mind.

I could tell I was blushing by the warmness in my cheeks. I could not let him know he made me *blush*. "I, uh, I'll be right back." I stuttered out, exiting the kitchen and into the bathroom that was

down the hall.

Pull yourself together, Anastasia!

I re-entered the kitchen where Alex sat, the plate in front of him, but his food untouched. "Thought I was going to starve." He groaned, now taking a bite of his sandwich.

I rolled my eyes at him. "Drama queen," I muttered, taking a seat.

He smirked at me, even with a mouth full of food.

I nudged his shoulder with mine. "Shut up,"

He swallowed and chuckled. "I didn't even saying anything."

"You were thinking it," I said before taking a bite.

He shrugged. "I think a lot of things," he said, taking a bite. After he swallowed I felt him leaned in close to my ear. "Especially about you."

Hey! Thank you guys so much for reading. I appreciate it so much! If you guys could comment below YOUR favorite story, I'd love to check it out! I've kind of hit a wall with stories and haven't been able to find one. Thanks guys! Xxx

Chapter Seven

After getting dressed in a pair of black capris that were cuffed at the bottom and white v-neck, I walked down the stairs and into the kitchen. It was Saturday morning so I didn't have to work today, with Alexander, but that didn't seem to stop him. I could hear him talk on the phone with someone in his office just down the hall.

I opened the fridge and searched it for something to eat.

Nothing.

This man apparently didn't keep much in here or at least he hasn't gone shopping recently.

I walked into his office, softly knocking on the opened door to show I was here. He glanced up at me and gave a small smile while holding his finger up signaling for me to wait.

"I don't care about Bishop's, I want the company. I've been wanting to move into publishing for a while. They're the best fit, bottom line." He told the man he was talking to, his voice unwavering. Alexander seemed liked someone who didn't lose. He said it himself, *he always gets what he wants.*

"I'm hanging up, but do not call me back until a contract is being written up." With that he hung up and slid the phone back in his pocket. "Ana," He greeted happily. A quick change to his previous mood seconds ago.

"Alexander," I greeted back as I took a seat in the leather love seat that was in his office. "you have no food." I said to him.

"I'll send my PA out today. You can have room service bring anything you'd like up."

"You have room service even for an apartment?" I asked, genuinely stunned.

He chuckled and nodded. "Yes,"

"I think I might go sight seeing." I told him. I hadn't gotten a chance to really see New York. I wanted to go visit the key monuments like Statue of Liberty, 9/11 Memorial, and all the others.

"I don't have time today, but tomorrow-"

"I don't need you to come." I said, cutting him off.

He shook his head. "You can't go alone."

"I'll put a hat on or something." Even I doubted that that would be enough for paparazzi not to recognize me. Those people were like

vultures.

"If you insist on going then I'll insist that you bring my two men, Ronan and Scott, with you."

I sighed. "Fine," I said, not wanting to argue. I was just happy that I'd actually be doing something today.

"But be back by four, we have that gala tonight and you need to get ready."

I groaned. I hated dressing up and I'm being forced to do it. "Why don't you people dress casually?"

He look down at his black slacks and button up shirt. "I am dressed casual."

I scoffed. "You're joking, right?"

"What? You don't think I'm casual?"

I rolled my eyes and got up. "There's nothing casual about you, Alex." I said before exiting the office.

I went upstairs to grab my purse and a few other things. When I came back down the two large men, dressed in all black suits who I assumed were Ronan and Scott, were waiting at the door with Alexander standing by them.

"Keep her safe," he instructed. "If a single hair on her head is misplaced neither of you will have a job."

I rolled my eyes. "Relax, Alexander. You're acting like an over protective father."

He scoffed. "Or your *husband*."

I laughed. "*Pretend* husband,"

He shrugged. "Either way, I want you safe. Have fun," And with that he walked away and back down the halls.

I followed them out and we took the back entrance to the building and into a nice SUV. I put on my black ray ban sunglasses that were the classic square shape. I remember saving up all summer for these when I was eighteen.

We drove all day looking at the different monuments and buildings. I thought I'd be bored with these two, but it was quite the opposite. Ronan was the younger one, only 29. He'd been working as a bodyguard since he was 23, but just started for Alex last year. He's joined the military when he was 18, just out of high school. Ronan didn't share too much more information.

Scott, on the other hand, was 52, but didn't look a day over 35. He was buff, like huge buff. The guy looked like he could eat me whole if he had to. He was more quiet than Ronan, but I'd manage to learn a little bit more about him. He's got two sons, twins, 24. He mentioned his wife briefly, just saying he missed her currently. I guess Scott was only a temporary body guard, filling in for another guy.

The two of them as a pair was quite comical. You could tell the age difference between the two in how they spoke. There were always quarreling about something.

"What the hell you doin', man?" Scott questioned Ronan as he apparently took the wrong turn. Scott's thick New York accent stuck out like a sore thumb in my eyes.

"Following the damn directions." Ronan retorted, pointing to the GPS he had pulled up on his phone.

"I'm drivin' next time." Scott said.

"Boys, be nice." I playfully scolded, earning two chuckles. "Where are we going now?"

"Yeah, where we goin' now?" Scott asked, only to mock Ronan.

Ronan looked over and narrowed his eyes before looking back at the road. "Staten Island ferry to see the Statue of Liberty." He said.

I nodded, excited to see it in person.

We finally pulled up to the boating doc and climbed up the stairs of the open building, waiting for the boat arrived. The times were posted on screens and it'd be here any minute. The place was packed and we stood in a crowd outside the glass doors, waiting to board.

They soon opened and we all rushed on. I followed Ronan and Scott, assuming they knew where we were going. We walked to the upper deck and sat on the orange plastic seats, facing the dirty windows looking out onto the Hudson.

"Used to ride this as a kid." Scott said, looking around. "Still smells like shit,"

Ronan and I both laughed and nodded. "That it does," Ronan agreed.

We saw the Statue of Liberty pass as we sailed on the water. It was much smaller than I imagined it'd be, but still cool to see.

After we came back we got in to car and went onto our next stop. It had been a long day and after seeing a rat I decided it was time to go back.

I arrived back at the apartment a half hour sooner than Alexander wanted me here. He walked out of his office when we arrived. He dismissed Ronan and Scott before walking over to me.

"Bye, Ana," Ronan said before disappearing into the elevator. I waved quickly too him as the doors closed.

"What was that?" Alexander questioned, sounding angry.

I raised an eyebrow. *He better change his tone real quick...* "What?"

"With Ronan," he attempted to clarify, but I still didn't know what he was talking about.

"Saying goodbye?" I guessed.

"He called you Ana,"

"My name? You're mad because he called me my name?"

"You said you didn't like when people you didn't know call you nicknames." He reminded, still looking annoyed.

"I know Ronan, and I said people I *like* could." I reminded him.

His jaw hardened. "So you like him?"

"Do you want me to hate him?"

"Do you like him?" He persisted.

"What's your problem? Where are you going with this?" I questioned, walking past him into the kitchen. I took off my jacket and slung it over the bar stool before turning back to him.

"You can't be flirting with-"

"Flirting?!" I question, not even giving him the chance to finish his sentence. This man had some nerve. "I was not flirting!"

"I know when a man is flirting, Anastasia."

"Whoopdie freakin' do for you. You're crazy if you think saying *goodbye* to someone can count as flirting."

He let out a heavy sigh while closing his eyes and pinching the bridge of his nose. "We need to get ready for that gala." He said, this man is going to give me whiplash.

I scoffed. "Well I hardly feel like going anywhere after the tantrum you just pulled."

"Tantrum?" He questioned, sounding appalled.

I nodded and crossed my arms. "Yes, you sounded like a child that was fighting over some toy."

He scoffed. "I am not a child."

I rolled my eyes. "Alright, Alexander, whatever you say, right?" I mocked.

His facial expression softened and he leaned his head back, letting out a breath, and then looking back over at me. "I'm sorry,"

I stay quiet for a moment but dropping my arms and nodding. "It's fine, just don't get crazy like that." I hated passive aggressive personalities.

"I'll let you get ready. Melanie, the stylist I hired for you, will be here any minute. Just come get me when you're done." He said before walking away.

Chapter Eight

Real quick question! Do you guys want me to post a cast? Or do you prefer to imagine the characters on your own? I'm always iffy about this when it comes to stories. Let me know in the comments! ALSO thank you guys so much for the reads and votes. I appreciate you all!

Another night of me not recognizing myself. Melanie had done my make up beautifully, my dark red lipstick compliments my silver gown. It was beautiful and hit to the floor. It was fitted around the waist but was looser and flowy towards the bottom.

I walked downstairs and opened the door to his office. He was sitting at his computer before looking over at me. His eyes immediately clouded as he shamelessly looked over me.

"Come on, Knight, quit gawking we have a gala to attend." I teased with a smirk.

He had a smirk of his own now. "I don't think I can quit." His voice low and husky. "You sound very eager considering we're announcing our engagement."

I narrowed my eyes at him. I had completely forgot we were doing that! But I shrugged, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of my reaction. "Fine by me, I'll go back upstairs and watch Netflix."

"I can think of a lot of different things we could do besides go to this gala." He said suggestively.

Now I was blushing. "Let's go," I nearly whined, trying to stop the inevitable flirting between the two of us. It's no secret Alexander was handsome just as much as he is charming. I knew I'd have to watch myself to not be fooled by the persona. This next year was going to be difficult and I would be forcing myself to keep in mind that this is all just a game.

He chuckled as he got up, following me to the front door. "You look stunning," he said while putting his black suit jacket on.

"Thank you, you don't look half bad yourself."

The car pulled up to Diana's mansion and stopped at the curved driveway where someone opened the car door for us. As Alexander got out, he held a hand for me to take, but I got out of my own without taking it. I seemed to dislike the lack of response as he placed his hand on the small of my back and began pulling us

forward and up the stairs.

The doors to the home opened and it was decorated to the nines. There were over a hundred people here, all wealthy beyond belief. The waiters and waitresses all walked around with trays of appetizers and drinks.

Alexander grabbed the two martinis as a woman with a tray walked by. He turned to hand the drinks over to me.

Please don't have tequila, I thought as I took a sip. I'll never forget my dad's Fourth of July party when I was seventeen. A bunch of my friends came over later that day after their family parties were over and since all the adults were drunk now we snuck the remaining bottle of tequila and emptied it. I'd never been so drunk or so hung over that next morning.

"Don't hate me," He said, looking down at me.

"Too late," I tried to joke, but by his facial expression, he thought I was serious. "I'm kidding. What is it?"

He instantly perked up at my words. "We have to sit with Diana and Dimitri."

I groaned and glanced over to the table where they were already sitting. "Does Dimitri always looks like someone killed his dog or is he only like that around me?"

Alexander laughed. "No, he always looks like that. I don't think I've ever seen the man smile."

"Me neither,"

"That's saying a lot," he said, probably assuming that I actually knew the guy more than just an acquaintance.

I shook my head. "Not really. This is actually only the third time I've met him."

His eyes widened in surprise. "Really?"

I nodded, but before I could continue, a plump older man was greeting Alexander with a firm handshake.

"Alexander, how are you?" He asked, sounding very cheerful.

Alexander returned the shake and seemed genuinely happy to be talking to him. "Very good, this is Anastasia." He introduces me. "Ana, this is Raymond, my uncle."

I gave a smile and was about to reach my hand out but was immediately engulfed in his arms. "Nice to meet you, Anastasia." He pulled away, looking between the two of us with a smirk that apparently ran in the family. "Alexander here doesn't really bring ladies around. For a while we had bets going on if he was gay."

I laughed and looked to see Alexander scowling, which only made me laugh harder. "Sometimes I still wonder that myself." I said, his uncle laughing once again.

Alexander quickly leaned down. "Let me get rid of those doubts

for you when we get home." He said huskily for only me to hear.

The blush was back...

I cleared my throat and his uncle luckily was too distracted with laughing to realize Alexander had said anything to me.

We talked with him for a few more minutes before moving onto other conversations. How he spoke to so many people without looking bored was beyond me. I'd grown incredibly bored by the fourth conversation. I tried to walk away numerous times, but Alexander always brought me back before I could.

Not soon enough, we were sitting at the table with other couples, including Diana and her husband.

"Put this on," Alexander whispered to me while putting a silver ring banded with diamonds on my ring finger. My eyes nearly fell out from how wide they were now. This ring was huge! I looked like I was wearing the damn diamond mine on my finger.

"How romantic," I sarcastically said.

He smirked. "I am actually,"

I lifted my hand, wiggling the ring finger. "Clearly,"

He grabbed my hand quickly in his, putting it down before anyone had the chance to see it. "So eager to show everyone." He said with a smirk.

I rolled my eyes and took my hand from him.

After the speaker at the front of the room was done announcing all the charities and where the proceeds go to, Alexander had stood up.

This was it...

This suddenly felt more real than it had before. We'd actually be getting married and everyone would know. It would no longer be our little secret.

"I'm Alexander Knight, as many of you know." He began, not really needing to introduce himself. "I have an announcement to make and I hope we can all celebrate tonight." He held his champagne flute and then turned to me.

Everyone was looking.

He smiled down at me and gave me a wink. I resisted the urge to roll my eyes since there was basically an audience. "This lovely woman, Anastasia Marie Rivera, had agreed to marry me and make me the happiest man in the world." Well the first part is true.

Everyone clapped and many 'aws' were let out.

"We've kept our relationship secret for too long and I couldn't be happier to share this with you all." He finished, suddenly putting his glass down and grabbing both my hands to pull me up.

"Don't hate me," he murmured for the second time tonight, quietly for only me to hear.

Before I had a chance to react his lips were on mine in a full blown kiss. I didn't have a chance to react before he pulled away, now wrapping an arm around my waist. The sensation of his lips on mine was still there and even though it was brief, I could tell he was a great kisser.

I shouldn't even be thinking of that!

Or how soft his lips were...

Why am I like this?!

We smiled for the many pictures that were being taken before sitting back down in our seats.

"Congratulations, Alexander and Anastasia." One of the woman from across the table said.

"Thank you," He said for the both of us. I just gave a small smile.

Alexander did all the talking throughout the night, which I was more than grateful for. I didn't even know what to say to them when they asked how long we've been seeing each other. He had made up a story, saying he met me at one of Diana's family get together last year.

I could laugh at how far that was from the truth. If people only knew...

I was in the bathroom, fixing up my makeup and basically pulling myself together. My hands were on the counter, holding me up as I leaned forward.

The door opened and I glanced at the mirror to see it was only my mother. I ignored her and started applying powder to my nose.

"Everyone believes everything." She said in a happy tone.

I didn't say anything and went to reapplying my lipstick.

"Anastasia, don't be childish." She tried to scold.

I narrowed my eyes at her through the mirror. "What do you want?" I asked her bitterly.

"I want my daughter to talk to me."

I let out a 'ha' in the most non humorous way. "Funny, you haven't wanted to talk to me in over ten years." I turned to face her.

She winced slightly at my words. "You could have talked to me."

"Why would I reach out to someone that clearly has no love for me?" I questioned before brushing past her and out the door. I left because I could feel the tears swell in my eyes and once I started crying I couldn't stop.

I tried my best to dry my eyes as I walked back over to Alexander and he looked over at me, his smile quickly falling. "Whats wrong?" He asked.

I shook my head, not answering.

"Ana, you're flushed and your eyes are red. You're either on drugs or upset."

He made me laugh my lightly, even through my sadness. "I'm fine," I tried to say, but my voice quivered.

"Let's leave," He said. He wrapped an arm around my waist and began walking out.

"Don't you have to say goodbye?" I asked.

He shrugged. "They'll live without a farewell from me."

We got into the SUV and drove back to his home. I felt relieved the moment I was out of that place.

"What's wrong?" Alexander asked.

I sighed and shook my head. "It's nothing,"

"Ana," His voice tender and he seemed to genuinely care. "please tell me."

"It's just Diana," I said. I looked over to him and his eyes were soft as he looked over my face.

"Whatever she said, don't listen to her. She's always been a cold woman."

I gave a small smile and reached for his hand, squeezing it lightly. I took it back before he had a chance to hold on. "Thank you,"

We arrived soon back at penthouse and I was about to go to bed before he called out for me.

"Yes?"

"Want some hot tea?" He offered.

I nodded. "Yes, but let me go change. I'll be right back." I said before walking up to the room.

I took off my heels and the jewelry I had on. I wiped most of my makeup on and threw my hair in a bun. I reached for the zipper of my dress and pull it down until it stopped about mid back. Typically I'd be able to shimmy out of a dress if I couldn't get it unzipped fully, but this one was too form fitting.

I continued to reach from behind and above, bending every which way I possibly could.

A small knock came from the door. "Ana, I brought you the tea."

Shit.

"Um, hold on." I called out, still fumbling around like an idiot.

"Is everything okay?" He asked after a moment.

"Just peachy," I whispered to myself. "I can't get this stupid dress off." I said.

"Do you need my help?" He offered, instantly making me blush at the idea.

"No, no I'll get it off eventually." I declined. He was the last person I would let help me now.

"Come on, I won't look."

I groaned and my arms fell to my sides in defeat. I walked over to

the door and Alexander was leaning against the frame with the mug in his hand.

What a sigh for sore eyes.

"Alright, help me." I said, defeated.

He gestured for me to turn around, with a smirk of course. I did so, narrowing my eyes at him before doing so.

His close proximity clouded my mind and I could see him behind me from the mirror on the wall across from me. His tall frame towered over me, even in this dim light i could see the definition of his toned arms. He was beyond handsome and there was no denying it.

I felt his warm finger tips graze the skin on my back, nearly causing me to gasp. I knew what he was doing. He purposefully unzipped it as slow as he could, especially over my behind.

"Alexander," I warned.

He chuckled from behind me. I could feel his warm breath fan the side of my face and neck. "One should be *very* careful with a dress such as this one." His voice was low and sexy.

I rolled my eyes. "Unzip the damn thing."

I felt him tug slightly, signally he'd gotten to the end. I turned, holding the dress to my chest. "Thank you, you can go now." I said.

He smirked. "Need help taking anything else off?"

"No!" I snapped. "Out!" I pointed at the door and he laughed while exiting. I could hear him as I shut the door.

That handsome bastard...

Hi guys! Yes, another note lol. Ok so you probably noticed that I put pictures into to basically illustrate the story. Do you guys like that? Should I continue? Let me know! Because if you don't I totally don't have to. Thanks for reading!

Chapter Nine

Just another picture above of how I see Ana because she's gorg

The next couple weeks were crazy. The press got ahold of the story that we were engaged and ran with it. Alexander and I were plastered on every news stand in the city. I didn't know how to handle this kind of attention. All I knew is that I didn't want it. I had to explain the entire situation to Nora which was far from easy. Since my father is currently staying in the hospital for treatment it's been easy to hide it from him. I hadn't gotten to speak to him since I left, but today Nora said he would call me. She had said he was doing much better, but something in her voice told me she wasn't telling me everything.

Julia had informed me after my suspicions that the treatment has a 20% chance of actually weakening my father even more. I guess faith in God would be the only thing we could cling to right now.

Fourth of July was next Sunday and I was sad not being able to spend it at home. We'd always throw parties at my house where my family and friends would all come. It was my favorite holiday actually. Dad would be barbecue, Nora would host, Uncle Sam would be drunk. It was a blast, there wouldn't be a person not having a good time.

Whenever I got a free moment with Alexander I was going to ask him. We were currently on our way to another brunch, but this time... with his parents. I can't believe the man was actually lying to his family too! I asked him if he felt bad about it this morning before we left and he simply answered that he wasn't. I tried to talk to him more about it, but just his luck, I was interrupted by another one of his business calls.

I twirled my thumbs around the other and looked out the window. My nerves were getting the best of my.

"Ana, don't be worried." I looked over to him. He always knew what I was feeling. It was almost irritating not being able to hide my emotions from him.

"I feel terrible for lying." I admitted.

He sighed. "You're not lying, we're really getting married."

"For a year, Alex. We'll plan some elaborate wedding and then what? Divorce?" I questioned. "It's just a lot," I whispered out the last part. I knew by the end of this things wouldn't be the same.

How could they? I'm a person of interest in New York now that I'm engaged to Alexander Knight.

He smirked, not making me feel any less bad. "We don't have to get a divorce." *What?*

I rolled my eyes. "*Please*, you'll be begging for a divorce by the end of all this." I concerted.

"Don't hold your breath," he muttered under his breath, looking out his window.

I furrowed my eyebrows, not knowing how to respond. This man was so confusing 87% of the time I was around him.

We got out of the SUV, immediately surrounded by flashing camera. How did they knew we'd be here?

Alex's arm went around my waist, leading me into the restaurant. As we entered he turned back to his bodyguard, George. "Who the fuck tipped off the press?" He nearly growled at him. I'd never seen Alexander this pissed.

He's so hot.

Oh my god, Ana, stop.

*"I'll fin*d out immediately, sir." George said, now calling someone.

Alexander turned towards me, his hand still on my waist. "Ana, I'm sorry, I didn't know they'd be here." He sounded truly sorry, he couldn't even look me.

"Hey," I said, taking one of his hands and give a reassuring squeeze. He looked at me now, gazing down at me with his piercing eyes. "it's fine, I'm fine, we're all good." I told him.

He nodded, removing the hand off my waist, still holding my hand, and leading me into the dining area. "Don't be nervous," he whispered to me as we approached the table. An older looking couple sat at the round clothed table, I'm assuming his parents. Alexander resembled both of them, but was nearly a clone of his father. "Mom, dad," He greeted them and they stood to give each him a hug. Alexander's Mother was a small petit woman with brown straight hair cut to her shoulders. She was the classiest looking woman I've ever seen. Alexander's father was just as tall as he was with the same facial features, but it was clear Alex had his mother's eyes.

"Mon fils, comment allez-vous?" His father started speaking what I assumed was French. I had take one French class in high school and failed miserably.

I looked between the two of them as they continued talking in French and laughing at some inside joke.

"This is, Anastasia." He introduced me as we all sat down.

"Anastasia, beautiful name for a beautiful girl." His father said in his thick French accent, he was just as charming as Alex. "I'm

Phillip, this is my wife, Amelia." He said, looking at her lovingly.

They really were a perfect couple.

"Nice to meet you, Anastasia." Amelia said with a warm smile.

I nodded and smiled back. "You too, Alex speaks so fondly of you both." I told them, earning a smile from the man himself.

We all ordered and continued talking. I even heard a couple of stories from Alex's past. He was apparently a riot and always on his feet as a child, getting into things he shouldn't be. *Nothing's changed apparently*.

"Oh my goodness, you didn't give me a moment to breath before you were into something else." Amelia huffed.

Alexander chuckled and shook his head. "So sorry, Mom."

She smiled and shrugged. "Don't say sorry to me. Say sorry to this poor woman who will have children just like you."

I nearly choked on my water at her words, coughing. Alexander patted my back. "S-sorry," I croaked out. The thought of have children was enough to make me have a panic attack.

"Are you alright?" Alex asked, but his tone gave away that he found my reaction hilarious.

I could see his smirk for the corner of my eye. I just nodded and took another sip of the water I nearly spat out everywhere.

"So when will you be having children?" She asked innocently, but just like her son, she knew exactly what she was doing.

This woman is trying to make me choke to death.

Shortly after we had finished our food we said our goodbye and were on our way back to his home.

"They loved you," Alexander said.

I looked over to see him smiling. "They're lovely," I said.

"We don't have to go back home. Let's do something," He offered.

"Like what?"

"Anything," He said with a shrug.

"Can we go change? I don't really want to wear heels and this dress all day." I said, tempted to take my shoes off now.

He nodded and took me by surprise when he grabbed onto my hand and kissed the top of it. "Of course," his smirk returned.

I rolled my eyes, but couldn't help the small smile that graced my face.

We entered the pent house and I went upstairs to change. I put on a pair of khaki shorts that hit around mid thigh and a cotton, olive green, v-neck. Finally I slipped on my black strappy sandals. I was dressed casually for the first time in what felt like forever.

I went downstairs and was surprised to see him dressed in a pair of jeans and black cotton shirt. "Alexander Knight not wearing a suit? The world must be ending." I teased.

He smiled at me. "I'm a man of many surprises, Ana."

I nodded. "Can't deny that, where are we going?"

"Let's go to Central Park. It's not far from here."

I nodded and followed him to the elevator. "Is George coming?" I asked.

He nodded. "Yes, he and Ronan." His voice fell a bit at Ronan's name.

The elevator dinged as we passed each floor, but then my worst nightmare happened.

We stopped.

But the door didn't open.

And the power went out.

Shit.

"What the hell?" I said. It was pitch black and I nearly screamed when I felt Alex's hand touch mine.

"It's just me," he laughed.

The emergency dim lights kicked on and I could see the shadows of his strong features.

"What happened?" I asked, moving forward to click the emergency button on the panel.

He pulled out his phone. "I'm not sure." He began dialing a number and was talking to someone on the phone. Not long after he hung up with a groan. "They're doing construction down the street and knocked the power out for this block." He said, annoyed.

"This is New York! They can't just fix it?" I questioned, feeling very claustrophobic at the moment.

"Ana, calm down, we'll be out shortly."

"Don't tell me to calm down, Knight." I snapped, crossing my arms.

He bit his lower lip, obviously trying not to smile. "It's going to be okay."

I took a deep breath and sank down on the ground. "Sorry," I murmured.

"Whats that? An apology?" He teased me.

I looked up to glare at him. "Shut it,"

He chuckled and sunk down next to me on the floor of the elevator. "You know... I know a few ways to make the time pass faster." He smirked.

"I will end you, Alexander."

He leaned his head back on the metal wall, laughing.

Being this close to him made me not think clearly. All I could think about was *him*.

"Wanna play a game?" He asked.

I shrugged. "What game?"

"Hmm," he tapped his chin and pursed his lips slightly. "20 questions?"

"Very cliche," I said, laughing. "but fine. Do you have any siblings?" I asked. I meant to actually ask him earlier when we went to brunch.

He nodded. "A brother, 24. He lives in Chicago. When was your last boyfriend?" *Of course he'd ask this.*

"Three years ago." I dated a guy name Chris through out high school. We broke up shortly after he went away to college. It wasn't a bad break up, we just wanted different things in life. He was my first everything and I was glad he wasn't some terrible guy. Even to this day we occasionally speak. "How many bribed wives have you had?" I asked as a joke.

He laughed. "Just you, my dear." He said and patted my knee. "Do you hate me?" He asked, completely changing the easy going atmosphere.

His question took me off guard and he looked uncomfortable after a few moments of me not saying anything. "Ana, you don't have to answer-"

"I don't hate you," I told him. He had a small smile on his face. "I'd rather spend time with you than Diana." I told him truthfully.

He grabbed my hand and intertwined our fingers. "Can I kiss you?" He asked, looking straight at me with those eyes. His gaze was heated as he looked between my lips and eyes. He scanned for an answer as he slowly began leaning in.

"It's not your turn," I said with a smile, stopping him.

He laughed and shook his head. "Well go on so I can ask you again."

Butterflies in my stomach like crazy.

"When was your last relationship?" I asked him.

"I've never been in one."

My eyes went wide. "Never?" He had to be lying.

He shook his head. "I'm not going to lie, I've been with a few woman, but never more than sex."

I nodded, accepting the answer I guess I already knew. He was a casual sex kind of guy. I could never do that.

"Do I need to repeat my question?" He asked with a smirk.

"Alex-" before I had a chance to respond the elevator lights kicked and the doors opened up, revealing a few staff members of the building.

"Mr. Knight, our sincere apologizes." A man said.

Alexander stood and lent out a hand for me to grab. I did so, standing up and adjusting the shorts.

"It's alright," He said to the manager. "Central Park?" He turned to

ask me.

I nodded and he grabbed my hand, pulling me out onto the street. Luckily there weren't any photographers there today so we got out in a breeze.

We walked over to the large park. It was beautiful and today was the least humid it's been since I came to New York. We walked along the path, under the many bridges that laid over us. The architecture of each one was unique and beautiful.

He continued holding my hand and I let him. Even though in the back of my hand I questioned my own sanity. Something about this moment with him felt *real*, like we weren't faking everything.

"Alex-"

"Ana-"

We both started at the same time.

"Go on," he gestured for me.

"When are we getting fake married?" I asked him.

He shifted uncomfortably for a moment, not looking at me. "It'll be a real marriage, Anastasia." He reminded.

I rolled my eyes. "You know what I mean."

"I'd probably say three months."

"That's it?"

"We could elope," He said, now smirking down at me.

I nudged my hip into his. "Not funny,"

He laughed lightly. "Never a dull moment with you," He said almost to himself.

"Same to you, dude."

He stopped walking a looked at me. "Dude? Did you just call me dude?" Humor clearly in his voice.

I laughed and nodded. "I think I did,"

He threw an arm over my shoulder and continued walking again. "Did you just friend zone your husband?"

"Shut up, Alex."

I can't believe I was going to be spending the next year with this man...

Just want to say thank you guys for all the wonderful comments and for voting! I appreciate you all xx

Chapter Ten

Merry early Christmas everyone! I appreciate all the love this story has received. You guys are awesome xx

It was Friday afternoon and it was almost time to go home. Today was an easy day since all the meetings and paper work got finished earlier this week. Not to blow my own horn or anything, but I was pretty great at this job. It wasn't difficult, just a lot of multitasking.

I didn't know if I was excited or not for Sunday. It was definitely my favorite holiday, but this would be the first year not spending it at home with my family. Alexander said they didn't really do much for Fourth of July, but we may be going to a friend of his for the day. At this point I should be expecting any change to come my home.

My dad had called me the other day and sounded like his old self. I was relieved that he was feeling better, it made all of this worth it. I was disappointed because I wouldn't be able to see any of my family until Thanksgiving, but it gives me something to look forward to. By that time I would be half over with our deal and a closer to actually being home permanently. Though my time with Alex hasn't been terrible, I've actually enjoyed his company. More than I would if I was staying with Diana.

"Hey, Anastasia." I looked up to see John, one of the other employees, walking up to my desk.

He was definitely a good looking guy. His golden blonde hair was cut on the sides super tight while the top was long and brushed back. I had never really talked him though since he was in another department on another floor.

"Hey," I greeted back, putting my pen down. "what's up?"

"A few of us are going to get a drink after work down at Spencer's if you want to come." He invited me, I'm shocked. Since I'm engaged to Alex I didn't think anyone would want to talk outside of work.

I instantly got excited considering all I've been doing were boring meetings and lunches. "Sure, thanks." I eagerly said.

He shot me a smile and nodded. "Cool, see you later."

Once John had turned to walk away I stood up from my desk and opened to door to Alexander's office. I fully expected him to be on the phone, but he was just looking down at his desk reading over something. The clicking of my heels caught his attention. He looked

up at me, a small smile gracing his handsome face. "Ana," Alex greeted before looking back down at his work.

I still held the door handle as I had another hand on my hip. "How's everything going?" I asked, not wanting to bring up John right away. I found that easing him into things I want to do works best.

His heavy sigh signaled that things weren't going the best that they could. With his answer also being "It's going," made it pretty obvious as well. *Maybe a drink would benefit him more than me.* "Everything going alright with you?" He leaned back into the office chair as his hands went behind his head. From this angle I was able to get a better view to see his features looking tired. His stubble was coming in slightly, but I thought that made him even more attractive.

"I can't complain," I said with a nod. "Oh, do you know John White?" I finally brought up.

He raised an eyebrow. "What about him?" His tone lower. *Ok so he does know him.*

"Funny story—" I started, awkwardly laughing to hide my nervousness. "He invited everyone out for drinks and I thought it'd be a good idea if—"

"No," Alexander cut me off to say, making something in me want to snap.

I crossed my arms over my chest, not standing down on this. "Well I wasn't asking, Alexander." I clarified.

His jaw clenched and released as he placed his hands on the wooden desk, pushing himself up to stand. "I don't want you drunk in front of a bunch of strangers." He snapped.

I rolled my eyes. "Who said anything about getting drunk? Besides, I was actually inviting you to come with." I held his stare and watched as his eyes softened from my words. He walked over to stand in front of me.

"I can't just go drinking with some of my employees, Ana." He said matter-o-factly.

I nodded. "I understand that, but I can go drinking with your employees because their my coworkers. I'll be fine. I'll even take Ronan if you want me to." I offered, trying to find a middle ground. Sometimes it seems impossible with this man.

"No, you'll take Scott." He insisted with a huff.

I bit my bottom lip to try and keep my smile from showing. He was so childish sometimes to the point where it actually was cute. "Fine, I'll take Scott." I agreed.

"You test me, Anastasia." He tried to say seriously, but the smirk gave him away.

I shrugged and sent him a cheeky smile before shutting the door and going back to my desk.

An hour later six o'clock came and it was time to go. The rest of the office that was going had already headed over there, but I was just finishing a few more papers that needed to be filed.

I skimmed through the papers, stopping at a particular orange envelope that had '*PRIVATE*' written in bold red letters on the front. He must have given me this by accident since he really only gave me notes and other basic things to look through. I nearly was about to read through it but the door opening from Alex's office caused me to gasp.

"I thought you were leaving?" I heard Alexander ask from behind me. I could feel his eyes on me that sent chills down my spine.

I glanced over my shoulder, still standing in front of the filing cabinet with the paper. "I'm almost done here." I told him, now quickly shoving it into a random folder before closing it.

He was suddenly much closer, his cologne wrapped around me and his breath fanned the side of my face. "This skirt is driving me crazy." He huskily said, tugging slightly on the material. The pencil skirt I was wearing was black that hit a little above my knee, hugging everywhere it needed to and lose where it didn't. "I can't believe I'm letting you go out for everyone to see you in this." His hand grazed from my hip to mid thigh, leaving a burn trailing wherever he had touched. "Every curve," he whispered against my ear.

My eyes went wide and I was grateful I wasn't facing him. "Alex," was all I said, trying to make it sound like a warning, but my voice was weak.

"Hmm," He hummed, his chest pressed lightly against my back. "I love when you call me that." I was slightly taken back by his words, but I didn't want to stop him.

The deal between him and my parents popped into my head and I turned around to tell him to stop, but gasped at the close proximity. He was a breath away to from me. I leaned against the filing cabinet, trying to create some distance, but it was no use. He just further crowded me. "W-what are you doing?" I stuttered out.

He made me weak.

He smirked and looked between my eyes and lips, lingering his own mouth over mine. "Something I should have done a while ago." And with that his lips pressed onto mine. This wasn't like the first time he kissed me when we announced our engagement— no. This was entirely different.

He started to move his lips slowly against mine and his hands gripped my hips, pulling me closer. My mind had stopped all brain

function at this point due to the trance his kiss put me in. My body reacted to him before my brain could and I was actually kissing him back. This was only the second time kissing Alexander, but they were addicting. My hands reached up to wrap around his neck, softly pulling on the hair I could reach. His tongue swiped my bottom lip and since thinking wasn't something I was capable of currently, I opened my mouth, letting him deepen the kiss.

If him groaning into our kiss wasn't enough to snap me back into reality, it sure would be his wondering hands that crept lower and lower. I put my hands flat to his chest and pushed gently, just enough to break the kiss. *What was I even thinking?!* I knew men like him didn't want actual relationships. He most likely thought we'd just use each other for *sex* during this year, but he has another thing coming.

"W-we can't," I breathed out.

"Why's that?" His voice was huskier and he was searching for an answer with his eyes on mine.

I'd really done it now...

"I don't just fool around, Alex." I explained, coming back to my senses. Having him so close to me made my brain nearly shut down.

He took a small step back, giving me the space I needed. "We're not fooling around, Anastasia." He said, now using my full name. I found this is something he did when he was serious.

"Alexander, this—" I gestured between the two of us. "can't happen again." I raked a hand through my brown curled hair and shut my eyes for a second just to clear my mind that's been filled with thoughts of our kiss. "We're getting married for a year and I know you have *needs*." *Okay this was more awkward than I thought it'd be.* "If you need to, um, sleep around? Well you can do that." I said, giving my unnecessary permission. I wanted to make it clear that I wouldn't be able to help him with *that.*

Someone kill me.

Alex's jaw was clenched as his eyes borred into mine. They darkened as he took a deliberate step towards me. "Sleep around?" He asked, his tone was pure disgust.

I nodded. "I know you have, well, *needs.* I can't help you with those so yeah. Sleep around," I further explained. "I just don't do casual sex."

His next step forward was a little too close for comfort. I felt his minty breath fan my face, his eyes never leaving mine. "I do not need to sleep around, *Anastasia.* We are getting married, but I'd never pressure you to do anything you weren't comfortable with. But just know that during this year, you are mine *just* as much as I am yours."

I didn't know how to respond to his words. They made my heart want to burst at the kindness in his voice. How was he this way when he was surrounded by a world of monsters? "Okay," was as all I said, nearly whispering. I truly wasn't at a loss for words.

"Mr. Knight," his name being called made him take a few steps away from me and I was mentally thanking whoever spoke. Judy rounded the corner, her heels clicking as she approached us.

Alexander glanced at me once more before turning towards her to see what she wanted. "Yes, Judy?" He inquired.

"These are the papers that were dropped off for you." She said, handing the papers over to him. "See you Monday, sir."

He took the papers from her. "Thank you," He said before she walked away. He tossed the stack onto my desk and looked up at me. "I'm coming with you tonight."

I raised an eyebrow. "I thought you don't drink with your employees?"

He shrugged. "I can bend my own rules can't I?" He asked with a smirk. "Shall we?"

I gave him a questionable look. "Alright," I said with uncertainty. I started walking towards the stairs, but looked back to see him standing by the elevator. I scowled. "I hate those things,"

He chuckled softly. "Don't worry, come on." He said and I groaned, but walked over there. He pressed the button and the doors opened.

His hand pressed my lower back, leading me in. I looked up at him with narrowed eyes. "Alexander," I warned.

He smirked down at me. "I think we're past the no touching stage."

I rolled my eyes, but didn't argue. I guess he was right.

Chapter Eleven

Merry Christmas everyone! Enjoy this extra chapter! Hope you guys have a great day xx

We stepped out of the car and approached the busy looking bar. Alex took a long stride in front of me to open the door, letting me enter first. Immediately the noise of talking and music with the bass to high surrounded me. I looked behind me to make sure Alex was behind me before I continued walking. His hand landed on the small of my back as he lead me forward. It was dimly lit and the place was packed. We at times sidestepped our way through the sea of people.

I saw John and a few other familiar faces over at a tall table near the corner. I lead Alexander over there, his arm still around my waist.

"Hey," I greeted as we stood at the head of the table.

"Hey!" A few of them greeted in unison while others gave a swift wave. When they saw Alexander behind me, their boss, they looked a bit uncomfortable.

Please let this not be too awkward of a night.

John stood from his seat, sticking a hand out to Alex. "Good to see you, Mr. Knight. Can I buy you a drink?" He asked.

Alex shook his hand. "Please, call me Alexander." He said to release some of the tension. "Next round is on me."

John nodded and smiled. "Alexander, that's gonna be weird to say." *Oh this is so awkward.*

After we got a couple seats to put up to the table, Alex kept his promise and ordered a round of drinks for everyone. He mingled amongst his employees, but he somehow managed to make it not feel weird that they were drinking with their boss who was pretty much a celebrity. We all laughed and talked, avoiding anything work related. It was so odd seeing Alexander laid back. The next couple hours flew by and before I knew it it was nearly ten o'clock.

I lost count after the fourth beer at how much alcohol I had actually consumed. All I knew was that I was drunk. Like *drunk drunk*. I needed to use the restroom and looked down at the ground.

This barstool had to have grown twenty feet...

I extended a wobbly leg out as I lowered myself out of the stool, nearly falling over as my feet hit the ground. I felt slightly unstable

as I teetered back and forth. I felt a hand hold my waist, studying me. "Are you alright?" I looked over to see Alex's handsome face looking at me with concern.

I couldn't help the giggle that escaped my mouth as I nodded. "Yup," *I was not alright.*

Alex looked amused with a knowing smirk. "Ana, are you drunk?" *Does he really need to ask?*

I bit my lip to stop from smiling, but it was no help. "*Noooo*, I'm not!" I denied, very obviously lying. I couldn't walk a straight line to save myself at this point. "Let me go, Alexander I need to pee." I slurred as I attempted to pry his hand from my hip. I didn't actually have to use the restroom. I think that my drunk self just wanted to move somewhere away from the table.

He shook his head and only tightened his hold, pulling my to his side even more. "I don't think you're able to walk there without hurting yourself." He sounded amused, yet his facial expression showed that he actually was concerned.

Oh my heart.

My attention span was little to none so when a song came on with an intense bass and good rhythm I completely forgot about ever going to the restroom. I looked up to him with an excited smile, probably verging on creepy. But drunk me didn't care. "I'm dancing," Before he was able to react, I was out of his hold and heading towards the dance floor.

I felt a hand grab my wrist, stopping me from going any further. I was pulled into Alex's chest and he gazed down at me. "Ana—"

"Oh come on, Alex, dance with me." I nearly poured as I took his hand with mine. I smiled at him, attempting to pull him with me, but this man was like a statue. I puckered my bottom lip out, giving him my best puppy dog eyes.

He smirked and shook his head. "How could I say know when you look so adorable?" He said, allowing me to lead him over to the sea of people also dancing.

Note to self— puppy dog eyes work.

The music was so loud and the rhythm was good enough to get lost it. I didn't realize I had started dancing without Alexander until his hips reached out to pull my back against his back. I swayed my hips and we moved in sync. I turned in his arms and he seemed happier this way as he took the opportunity to keep his hand securely right at the small of my back. My arms reached around his neck and we continued moving together.

His head dipped down and I felt his lips press against my neck and an embarrassing moan escaped me lips, making him grin against me. "Don't make those noises here, Anastasia." He huskily

said. He pulled away to look at me with a heated gaze.

"Where then?" I teased with a smile, looking between his eyes and lips. His soft lips that I wanted to kiss more than anything in that moment.

Drunk Ana had fully taken and I was definitely going to regret this in the morning.

I don't typically get drunk because when I did, there was always a story to tell. I was *that* girl. I could barely recall the last time I really drank, which was a friend's birthday last year. That was one of the best day of my life. We drank and laughed all night. There wasn't a single person there that wasn't having a great time.

Alexander groaned as he closed his eyes and shook his head. "If you weren't drunk I'd bring you home and you'd never leave my bed." He leaned down to whisper before kissing the spot just below my ear.

Sober Ana was internally screaming at his words, the current Drunk Ana had no problem with continuing my teasing towards him. I pressed my body as close as I could to him and smirked. "Take me home,"

He let out a grunt as he squeezed my hips a little tighter. "Oh we are," He said, making me want him in that moment.

This is why I don't drink tequila.

His hand lifted up to cup my cheek, tucking the stray strand of my brown hair behind my ear. "and you're going to sleep." I was about to protest, but Alex grabbed my hand and pulled me through the people and the bar out the door.

"I don't want to go home." I whined like a child as I tried to remove my hand from his iron grip.

The SUV pulled up and Alexander lifted me into the car and swiftly buckled my seat belt before settling into his own seat. "Home," He said to George.

"Can we go to White Castle?" I asked. I was craving one of those sliders I'd typically never eat.

He raised an eyebrow. "White Castle? That stuff is pure garbage."

I shrugged. "I'm pure garbage, feed me trash."

He just looked confused but told George to go through the drive thru anyway. We pulled up to the white building where the fluorescent street lights nearly hurt your eyes.

After we paid we got our food and the iconic white bag was handed back to me. My eyes went wide as I snatched it and duh though to pull out a slider.

"It's like Christmas," I cheered, taking a bite. "Oh my god, so good." I said over a mouth full of food.

He shook his head as he chuckled at me. "Where have you been

all my life?" He asked, clearly amused as he watched me basically swallow my food whole.

"Arizona," I answered quickly..

"I've never been to Arizona."

My eyes widened. "What?! You've never been to my state?! I don't care." I dramatically stated before declining my reaction. Drunken me didn't care about anything right now. Nothing, but White Castle.

When we arrived back I wobbled in, but Alex steadied me by gripping my waist. "Let's go do something!" I exclaimed, trying to turn back towards the door.

"The only thing you're doing is going to bed." He said as he tried leading me over to the stairs.

I dead weighted my self as I fell back into his chest like a trust fall. He effortlessly caught me and was keeping me up. I crossed my arms over my chest and shook my head. "No, Alexander Knight, I will not be going upstairs." I said stubbornly.

"Ana, as much as I like to be around you, you smell like an onion and alcohol. You need sleep," He said.

I stood up and turned towards him with narrowed eyes. "You're jealous of my slider,"

He raised an eyebrow. "Your what?"

"My White Castle slider! If you wanted to have a bite you should have said so."

His eyebrows furrowed as the look of confusion took over. "What? I- no, I'm not arguing with you. Time for bed," he took a step closer, trying to get me to turn up the stairs.

I crossed my arms against my chest and shook my head.

"Ana," He nearly warmed. "you forced me to do this." Before I had a chance to protest, alex picked
me up and over his shoulder.

"Put me down, I'll sue you!" Drunken me threatened.

"I'll be waiting for the papers in the mail." He joked.

I heard my door open and I was expecting him to toss me down, but he put me down gently on the bed and began taking off my heels. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"Making sure you go to sleep." The blanket was moved from under me as he now placed it over me. "I'll see you in the morning."

My eyelids felt heavy as soon as my head hit the pillow. I saw Alex turn to leave, but I quickly reached out for his hand making him look back at me. "Stay," I pitifully said, my eyes barely open.

He leaned down and I felt him press a kiss against my temple. "Sleep, Anastasia." His words were the last I heard before sleep consumed me.

Chapter Twelve

Ok so I've been slacking a little bit on writing because I can't stop playing Battlefront lmao. Since we're now on the topic of Star Wars.. what did you guys think of The Last Jedi? Not gonna lie I'm a lil disappointed! Ok ya let me know what you think hahaha

I woke up the morning after drinking an amount of alcohol no one should ever consume. The pounding headache I now had would remind me I went too far all day. I was tangled in the sheets and blankets, laying on my stomach with a pillow covering my head. I lifted myself up my elbows slightly, the pillow tumbled over. My eyes were squinted as the sun shined through the curtains making me groan and lay my head back on to the mattress. I slowly turned over to my back, my arm reaching over to rest over my eyes.

My alarm started going off, making me basically want to die. It was blaring a random song I had in my music library and just seemed to be getting louder and louder. I without opening my eyes, I reached for the phone of my bedside table, thanking my drunken self for placing it there, and pressing a button to shut it off.

But that was short lived.

Just as I turned off the alarm, my phone beginning ringing from a phone call. With a grunt I sat up and reached over again to pick it up. Nora's picture and name flashed across my screen.

"Hello?" I answered, my voice slightly rasp.

"Ana, are you sick? You sound sick," her motherly instincts were on high alert as concern filled her voice.

I moved to phone away from my ear slightly, her voice was basically echoing in my head due to my hangover. "No, no, what's up?" I asked, trying to get off the subject. Nora wasn't particularly fond of Julia or I drinking alcohol. Ever since last year when *her* best friend died from a car accident due to a drunk driver she's been very weary about it.

"Well it's about your father," She started, I was giving her my full attention now. "He's doing okay and the cancer seems to be lessening." Though the positive news, she seemed to be hiding something.

"Well that's good... what's the bad news?" I asked, knowing her too well to be able to hide anything.

She let out a deep sigh. "While the cancer is lessening, they found

something else." My father was given five years after his diagnosis of stage two lung cancer that past January. There is always a chance of survival past the time given, but it was rare, especially without the treatment he has now.

I sat up in the bed and ignored the spinning from the sudden reaction. "What is it?" I said urgently.

"While the treatment is helping, his immune system has gone down severely. He developed pneumonia," she explained.

"Well can't they treat that too?"

I heard her sniffle, she was crying. "The medicine for the pneumonia won't mix with the treatment for the cancer. He's currently on an isolated floor to ensure that it doesn't get any worse. His body has to fight off the infection on its own before they can continue anything."

I put my hand over my mouth to stop the sob that almost escaped my mouth. "Well what does this mean?" I asked through a hushed cry. I knew exactly what it meant, but I couldn't get myself to say it.

"It means we've got to pray for a miracle,"

~>~

I talked to Nora for a while more after the tears I had were uncontrollable from the fear of losing my dad. If it wasn't one thing it's another and I didn't know how much more my family could take. We were living on edge at this point knowing anything could happen. The news of my dad was enough to sober me, but the headache was now because of crying and worrying.

I tossed the covers over the side of my and looked down to see I was still in my clothes from yesterday. I got out of bed and went over to the bathroom to take a shower.

I stayed in the shower until the water ran cold. Stepping out, I wrapped a towel around my waist and walked over to the counter to wipe the fogged mirror. I stared back at myself and I was paler than usual. Arizona kept me tan, but the sticky humidity of New York kept me inside and away from the sun. I shook my head to rid myself of the thought, I didn't care about any of that right now really. I've been so consumed with how I look to others since I've been here that I didn't even realize I wasn't focusing on *why* I was here. My dad.

I've gotten so caught up in it all, but how could I not?I was here, in a beautiful penthouse that would never really be my home. I had a fiancé, that would never be mine. I had a life here in New York that would never be real. I was caught up in all of it the past almost two months, but I had to snap out of it. I felt guilty that I was living so lavishly while my family was basically mourning for my father.

I needed to go home.

Even just for a couple days.

As soon as the idea of going home got into my head, I rushed over to the closer to quickly throw on some jeans and a random shirt. I swung my door open and held onto the rail as I basically flew down the stairs.

Alexander's office door was open so I didn't bother knocking as I stepped into the room. He wasn't sat at his usual spot. I looked around before exiting and looked down the hallway. I passed another spare bedroom that I wasn't as big as the one I was using upstairs, but it was still nicely decorated and completely untouched. It seemed to be more of a room to look at rather than one to live in.

I continued walking until I was met with the last door on the left side of the hallway. It was slightly cracked. I pushed on the dark wood door and it slowly swung open. My mouth was slightly taped as I took in my surroundings. The walls were dark grey that looked beautiful against the dark wood of his flooring. The bed was huge with an almost black comforter and matching pillows. The bed was unmade and a few clothes were scattered amongst the room. This had to be Alexander's room. continued walking until I was met with the last door, it was slightly cracked open. I pushed it further and instantly knew it was Alexander's. It was the biggest room in the house, with a gorgeous view of the city.

"Ana," his familiar voice filled the room.

I gasped and quickly spun on around to face him. My eyes were wide as I turned to him to see Alexander standing there with a towel around his waist, the water from the shower he had taken was still on his bare chest.

His *very* toned chest.

"Um, Alexander, I-I'm sorry I couldn't find you and-"

He chuckled, cutting off my rambling. "It's fine, did you need something?" *I need you to put a damn shirt on.*

"I-I'll wait for you to get dressed." I mumbled like an idiot. I didn't wait for his response as I quickly left his room, shutting the door behind me.

I walked into the living room and sat on the black leather sofa. A few minutes later Alexander came walking out with his usual slacks and button up. "I need a favor." I said, standing up. I didn't want to beat around the bush with this.

He raised an eyebrow and seemed surprised. "Of course, what is it?"

"I've got to go home for a couple days." I said.

"Ana-"

"I need to, Alexander. My father isn't doing well and I have to be with them. I haven't seen any of them in nearly two m-"

"Ana," he cut me off making me glare at him.

"What?" I snapped.

"I was going to say yes, we could go tomorrow and be back on Tuesday."

My eyes widened and I couldn't help but throw my arms around him to hug him. "Oh thank you," I was relieved more than anything. I thought this would turn into some big fight, but it was wrong on my part to judge how he'd react. I didn't like our arranged marriage, but Alex has been nothing but nice to me.

He hugged me back before I pulled away with a smile. "I'm serious, Alex. Thank you,"

He shook his head. "Don't thank me. You're doing me a favor, now it's time I do the same." He said, reminding me again how fake this all was.

I stepped back from his hold and nodded. "Alright, I'm going to go pack a few things."

"Wait, how are you feeling?" He asked smugly. "I didn't think you'd be alive today."

I gave a small smile. "Well, the news I got this morning sobered me up pretty good."

His smirk fell and was soon replaced with worry. "What happened?"

"I don't really want to talk about it." I said, knowing I'd burst with tears if I did so.

He looked like he wanted to say something but just nodded before walking away.

Ok I'm sorry this is kind of a filler chapter. Next one will be better!

Chapter Thirteen

Hi I'm back with another annoying message lol but okay a picture of Alex above! The model has tattoos, but Alexander doesn't. He's just really nice to look at lmaooo ALSO what do you guys think of the new cover for the story? AND FINALLY if you play Animal Crossing Pocket Camp drop you ID below!!! I'll add you(:

I hadn't realized as he agreed to let me go home that he said *we* would be going. I brought my suitcase down the next morning and saw his as well. My eyebrows furrowed in confusion and I walked in the kitchen to see him standing there drinking coffee.

"Ready?" He asked me coolly.

"Are you coming with?" I asked. It's not that I didn't want him to come, I was just surprised. I didn't know how to feel about my fake fiancé coming with me to meet my parents and family.

"Yes?" He said questionably.

"Alex..." I began and looked over to see him smirking. "You can't meet my family."

"Why's that?"

"Because! You're... you and this whole thing," I gestured my arms around me. "It's not real and to be honest, Nora hates you."

He laughed. "She doesn't know me,"

"She knows of you and what you are to me." I said.

His smirk didn't falter as he pushed himself off the counter and took the steps over to me. "And what am I to you?"

"A pain in the ass," I retorted, turning on my heel to walk away and back into the living room.

As I bent down to grab my suitcase, it was snatched away by Ronan. "I'll get this for you." He said with a smile.

"Are you sure? It's kind of heavy." I said, feeling bad he'd have to carry my bag that was definitely over packed.

He chuckled and lifted the bag up slightly. "I think I can handle it." He reentered the elevator and the doors closed.

"I don't like him flirting with you." I turned around to see Alex with his jaw hard, nearly glaring at me.

I rolled my eyes. "He was doing his job."

Alex shrugged. "He won't have one if he keeps it up." He grumbled as he approached me, putting a hand at the small of my

back and leading me into the elevator.

"You can let go of me now." I said as the doors shut.

He leaned forward to press the button, his hand still on me. "I know," he kept looking forward with a smirk on his lips.

~>~

The large door lifted to Alexander's private plane and we walked up the small set of stairs, my hair flying everywhere from the wind. I entered the surprisingly spacious plane and adjusted my hair from the tornado it looked like it was just in.

"I can't believe you have your own freaking plane." I said as I sat down in the cream colored, plush, leather seat.

Alex sat in the on across me. "I have three,"

My eyes widened. "Three?!"

He nodded and shrugged. "I like collecting things."

I laughed. "Normal people collect keychains or I don't know, snow globes."

Before he could say anything his phone began ringing and he looked down, sighing. I gave him a questioning looking and he shook his head, answering the call.

"Alexander Knight," he spoke. I didn't get to hear the rest of the conversation before he got up to walk away and continue speaking to the person.

We soon took off and were in the air. I looked down and watched the city disappear as we entered the clouds.

~>~

"Anastasia," a soft voice said. I felt my shoulder being softly shaken as I slowly lifted my eye lids. Alexander was standing next to me.

"Hmm?" I said as I stretched. I must have fallen asleep. I was glad though because the flight to home was nearly three hours.

"We're here," He said.

I nodded and looked out to see we were at the airport, the palm trees swaying in the wind. I smiled as I stood up, excited to be home.

As soon as the plane door opened I was walking down the steps and the warm breeze hit me. It was sticky or humid, just warm. I looked back to see Alexander gathering some things.

"Come on, Alex." I whined, too impatient to wait for him.

He chuckled and walked over towards me. "Let's go,"

I walked down the stairs to the ground and a black limo was waiting for us. "This is a bit much to go to my parents house." I said to him.

He shrugged. "After you," he opened the door for me and gestured for me to get in with a smile.

I rolled my eyes, but got into the vehicle.

As we drove the familiar sites passed us and I felt happier than I have in a long time. I never realized how much I loved this place until I left.

We soon turned down my street and before I knew it we stopped in front of my house. It wasn't anything fancy, just you're regular home. I got out, not waiting for the door to be opened and walked up the porch steps. I knocked on the door, waiting for someone to open it. I didn't tell anyone I was coming home.

Julia answered the door and her eyes went wide. "Annie!" She exclaimed, throwing her arms around me.

I hugged her back. "I missed you, Jules." She pulled away and looked passed. I looked over my shoulder to see Alex walking up to me. "Julia, this is Alexander." I introduced. "Alex, this is my sister, Julia."

He gave a smile and stuck his hand out. "Nice to meet you, Julia."

She looked down at his hand before walking over and giving him a hug. "We hug in this family," She said after pulling away.

He chuckled and nodded. "I'll keep that in mind."

"Come on, mom's in the kitchen." She said, leading us into the house. The living room was the same with the wooden floors and cream colored walls that numerous pictures hung on.

I saw Nora standing at the sink, her back towards me. I walked over to her and bumped my hip with hers, making her look up with confusion before realizing it was me. "Oh my goodness, you're home." She said, nearly laughing, as she pulled me in for a tight embrace.

"Hi," I breathed out as she nearly squeezed me to death. "Can't. Breathe."

She pulled away and rolled her eyes, but kept her smile. "I can't believe you're here!"

"Me neither," I laughed lightly. I saw Alex standing in the doorway and knew it was time to introduce him to her. Nora was very picky when it came to the people my sister and I were dating. Considering this wasn't even a real relationship with him I knew she wouldn't be too fond of Alex. "Nora, this is Alexander." I shyly introduced.

"It's a pleasure-"

"Why did you bring him?" She asked me, cutting him off, her eyes never leaving mine. She looked upset as her eyebrows furrowed and her mouth curved downwards into a frown.

"Nora," I sighed. "please." I pleaded. It's not that I wanted her to like Alex, but I didn't want to make this awkward. I'd only be here for a couple days and wanted to make the most of it.

She nodded and looked back over to him. "Nice to meet you, Alexander."

He offered a small smile, but didn't say anything.

"Where's your stuff? You can put it in your room..." she said, trailing off as she went back to doing dishes.

"Is the guest room a mess?" I asked with a knowing smirk. The guest room was half a bedroom and half an office space for my dad since the computer was in there. She used it as a recreational room for her knitting and other sewing things. My dad always used to get frustrated when he'd go in there and would be cluttered with *things*.

She pursed her lips to keep from smiling. "Well I'm working on a project.."

I nodded and looked back at Alex with a cheeky smile. "Looks like you'll be on the couch."

He groaned. "Wonderful," he sarcastically mumbled.

We got our bags from the car and we went in downstairs to the finished basement. It had carpeting and was completely decorated. Besides the cold draft you'd never think you were downstairs.

"You can put your stuff here. The bathroom is over there and there's extra blankets in the closet." I said to him. "The couch reclines if you prefer it that way."

"Ana, just let me sleep in your room." He nearly pleaded.

I raised an eyebrow and gave a pointed room. "With me? No way,"

He smirked. "Scared to sleep with me?" *Yes*.

I scoffed. "No, Alexander. Nora is here and she wouldn't appreciate that at all." Well I wasn't lying. Nora *would* be pissed if Alex slept in my room. She was old fashioned with many things, this being one of them.

"Fine, but if I can't sleep with you I at least want a kiss goodnight tonight." He said with a smug smirk.

I narrowed my eyes at him. "Nice try," And with that I walked back up the stairs.

~ > ~

I sat on my bed that I missed almost just as much as my family. That might be a horrible thing to think, but sleeping is something I'm *very* passionate about. I had numerous pillows and blankets so it was literally like seeing on a cloud.

My room was cluttered, but not with junk. I had many nic-nacs and pictures. On top of my dresser were many pictures, jewelry box, and a few other random things I had gotten throughout high school and college. Over head of my dresser was my poster of Guardians of the Galaxy because Chris Pratt is gorgeous- *duh*. It stood out among my pale yellow walls that haven't been repainted since I was eight.

People were always surprised when I said I still lived with my parents, but I actually was in the process of moving into an apartment with Kayla before my mother called me. Kayla ended up moving in with another friend of hers since I couldn't.

It saddened me to think that I was missing every thing going on here at home. Everyone's lives continued, but I felt like mine was on hold. I felt as if this next year would almost put me behind in everything.

A knock came from the door and before I could get up Kayla stormed in with a glare on her face. "Why would you not tell me you'd be coming home?!" She exclaimed as she stomped over.

I gave a apologetic smile. "Sorry, Kay, it was last minute." I stood up to hug her.

She squeezed me tight before letting me go. "So where's Mr. Hot Rich guy?"

I raised an eyebrow and couldn't help but smile. "*Alexander* is downstairs,"

"Well what are we doing up here? I wanna meet him." She said, turning to pull me out and downstairs.

I groaned. "Don't be weird," I said to her.

She looked back with an innocent look. "What do you mean?"

My eyes narrowed. "You know exactly what I mean." I love Kayla dearly, she's my best friend. But she had a tendency to be a bit... much. Basically she has no boundaries with anyone.

We walked into the kitchen and there he was talking with Nora, which nearly shocked me. "Hey," I said walking in, looking between the two of them.

Alex looked up at me with a smile, walking over to me. "There you are,"

"Alex, this is Kayla." I introduced him, ignoring the look he gave me and how it made me have butterflies.

He looked away from me and back at Kayla with a warm smile that made his handsome face even more attractive some how. "Very nice to meet you," He said.

Kayla almost looked star struck as her mouth was slightly agape. "H-hi,"

I rolled my eyes, but smiled at her reaction. Kayla wasn't quiet so this was weird to see her like this. But she's always been one to keep up with gossip magazines and shows so seeing someone that's always on the front page in person would be a little bit exciting.

"Alexander here was telling me about your new job." Nora said from behind.

"How I'm basically his slave?" I joked and gave Alex a knowing smile before looking back to Nora.

She laughed and nodded. "Not exactly how he quite put it, but yes."

"No complaints, I said you didn't have to work." Alex said, walking over to stand beside me.

I rolled my eyes. "Yeah, yeah,"

Nora shook her head, smiling. I was surprised to see she was actually warming up to him so quickly. As charming as Alex can be, Nora wasn't one to be *wooed*.

"Are you coming to the hospital with us?" Nora asked Alex and I immediately shook my head.

"No," I answered for him.

He looked down with furrowed eyebrows. "Why not?"

"You really can not meet my dad. He doesn't need to know about our arrangement." I said.

He nodded and looked away from me. Something in his facial expression told me that he was upset about something.

The rest of the night we all hung out and it seemed almost normal. It was nice see Alex so casual and despite my original thoughts, he almost looked like he belonged. Before I could only imagine him in his perfect world back in New York.

I was up in my room getting ready for bed by slipping on my night shorts and oversized t-shirt that nearly covered the shorts. I was also picking my outfit for tomorrow since I was going to go up to the hospital in the morning to see my dad.

Someone knocked on my door and I walked over to open it. Alex was leaning against the doorframe he was nearly to talk to walk through. His eyes looked me up and down before meeting my eyes. "Just thought I'd say good night." He said with a smirk.

I raised and eyebrow and crossed my arms, unconvinced. "Mhm, well goodnight." I said.

"No goodnight kiss for your fiancé?" He said smugly with a now lazy smile.

I rolled my eyes, but couldn't help the small smile. "No, Alex."

He chuckled and looked past me into my room. "So this is your room?"

I looked back behind me and back at him. "No it's the kitchen."

He now rolled his eyes and stepped in, his shoulder brushing mine. "It's very... you." He said, looking around and picking up random things before putting them down to look at something else.

"*Sure*, Al, come on in." I muttered sarcastically, shutting the door before turning back to him.

He turned to face me with a wide grin. "Al? Yet another nickname. I like it,"

I nearly blushed at the fact that I called him that. I've always had

a problem with giving people nicknames or calling them basically anything other than their full name. "What are you doing?" I asked, changing him he subject.

He chuckled, knowing what I was trying to do. "Who's this?" He asked, pointing to the photo of Chris and I where he's kissing my cheek.

We'd never be more than friends and to this day we are friends so I didn't want to throw away all the memories and stuff from our relationship. Chris is someone I value deeply and I could honestly say I love him, but never romantically.

"Chris, he's a good friend." I said, walking over to look at the photo.

"He seems like *too* good of a friend." Alex mumbled.

I rolled my eyes. "Oh shush, he was my ex-boyfriend, but we stayed friends after."

He turned to look at my with a slight frown. "What kind of friends?"

I grunted and lightly tapped the back of my hand to his shoulder. "Don't be gross, he's *just* a friend." I tried to convince, but he didn't seem to believe me from the frown that remained on his handsome face.

"Do you still see each other often?" He asked, not letting the subject drop.

"When I lived here, yes." I nodded and crossed my arms due to the feeling of having to be defensive.

He turned to fully face me instead of standing next to me. I gasped as he pulled me into his chest, pinning me to the front of the dress. His hands held my hips so close to where my only option was to hold onto his toned shoulders. "I hate the idea of you being with someone else." He whispered against my ear. Chills were sent down throughout my body. The feel of his lips on my skin left a burning need for more.

"W-what?" I whispered out.

His face shifted to hover over mike as he looked between my eyes and lips. "I *hate* the idea of you being with anyone else." He repeated with a huskiness. "Everything about you drives me crazy, Anastasia." He presses his body more into mine nearly causing me to moan. "*Everything*," at that word I felt him *completely* against me.

"Alex," I breathed out as he began peppering kisses from my jaw down to my neck. I let out a soft, and embarrassing, moan as he began to suck on the spot between where my neck meets my shoulder.

He pulled away and his eyes looked straight into mine with clear *want* in them. "Don't make those noises, Ana. You alone in these

little shorts are enough to make me go crazy." He said with a smirk as he tugged slightly on the soft material of my shorts.

I blushed, but thankfully my room was dimly lit by just the lamp by my bedside so you couldn't see. "I should go to bed..." I said, slightly pushing on his chest to get some space.

He nodded and swiftly tucked the hair behind me ear. "Goodnight, Ana."

"Goodnight,"

He moved away, giving me one last glance before shutting the door.

I turned to get in the bed still shocked from what had just happened with Alex. I didn't know how or what to feel at this point. Everything was so confusing and complicated because of the many contracted deals going on. I didn't want to let my guard down and get hurt, especially from something I know could have been avoided.

My thoughts came to a complete halt as my bedroom door was swung opened. I turned back to see Alex coming over towards me. "Alex? What are you-" I was cut off my his hands grabbing either sides of my face and pulling me in to smash his lips on mine.

He pulled away with a wide grin. "I'm sorry I had to do that." He gave me a wink before exiting for the second time truly leaving me stunned.

He was a drug and I was an addict.

I hope you guys have a very Happy New Year! Stay safe and get drunk xx

Chapter Fourteen

REAL QUICK! What do you guys think of the new cover? Do you like this one or the old one? I'll leave pictures of the two below this and you guys can vote!

OR THIS ONE?!?!

I was on my way to the hospital using my old 2004 Toyota Corolla that sounded like actual death. I got up extra early to avoid any run-ins with *him*.

My mind wouldn't let me not think about what happened with Alex last night in my bedroom. He kissed me and I wanted to kiss him back. The scariest part of this all was that I wanted to pull him back to me. I had to swear to myself that I wouldn't let that happen again.

I pulled up to the hospital and parked my car. When I entered the hospital I talked to the receptions about where my dad's room was before going up the elevator.

The doors open and I got out, walking down the hallway to his room. I softly knocked on the large door before opening it to see him reading the newspaper in the hospital bed.

He appeared to be more filled out, which is a good thing since he'd lost too much weight because of the cancer. The gray and white stubble was coming back on his face. He lost his hair on top from the radiation, but it appeared to be coming back. His glasses were settled nearly the tip of his nose.

"Hi, dad." I said with a smile.

He looked over to me with wide eyes and a wide grin. "Annie, what are you doing here?" He asked.

I walked over to him and bent down to hug him to which he returned by wrapping his arms around me. "I'm only here until tomorrow. I had to come see you." I said, pulling away. I felt overcome with emotion that I hadn't realized the tears streak down.

"Oh my, sweet girl, I'm so happy to see you." He said, grabbing my hold and giving it a squeeze. "How's your mother?" Despite the fact that Diana completely left my father and I behind, he still asked about her. I always asked how he could even think of her after what she did to us, but he always said that he pitied her and that was greater than any anger he had for her. He was too busy raising me to be angry at a sociopath.

I shrugged. "The same," I said. I couldn't tell him that she actually managed for me to dislike her more.

"Well the summers more than half over so you'll be coming home in a few weeks." He said, trying to see the brighter side of things.

If only he knew...

"About that... I um, was thinking about accepting a internship there for the rest of the year." I lied.

He looked surprised with a flash of sadness going through his eyes before hiding it with a proud smile. "I think that's a great idea, Annie." He encouraged.

I gave a smile smile and nodded, feeling incredibly guilty for not telling the truth. "Thanks, dad."

After spending nearly seven hours here at the hospital it was finally time for me to leave. Dad had to start his daily routine of medicines and other therapies.

I gave him one last hug and kiss on the cheek before pulling away and walking out.

"Oh, Annie," dad called out. I turned back around, standing in the doorway to hear him. "things will all work out in time. They always do," He said with another smile.

I smiled at him. "Love you," I said to him before leaving once again.

~>~

I opened the front door and shut it behind me as I walked in. "Hello?" I called out, but the silence remained. I walked over to the living room and then through the house to the kitchen. No one was here.

I picked up my phone to call Nora... then Julia... then Alex. Yet no answer.

I looked out the back door window to the backyard and still no one. When I turned back around I noticed a yellow sticky note on the fridge. I unstick it and read it.

Took Alexander sight seeing. Be back soon if you beat us home!
Nora

My phone began ringing and I thought it would at least be one of them calling me back, but no, it was actually Chris.

"Hello?" I answered.

"Why did I have to hear it from Kayla that you're back in town?" Chris questioned.

I laughed. "I'm sorry, it was a last minute trip."

"Every thing seems to be last minute with you lately." He said. "You're engaged?" His voice sounded down, like he was upset. We were close and he'd met all the guys I went on dates with after him, disapproving of nearly all of them. He was more of a brother at this

point.

I sighed. "Wanna talk over coffee?" I asked.

"Sure, I'll pick you up. I'll be there soon."

A few minutes later he pulled up in his 2002 Ford blue truck. I opened the door and the familiar squeak was back as I swung it open.

"Hey," He greeted as I shut the door and settled in, pulling my seat belt over my chest. He drove off back on to the main road. I knew he was taking me to our usual spot which was 'The Red Diner'. It was a small and local restaurant that was a popular destination for locals. I remember always being there after school and other events like homecoming or prom.

"Lets not beat around the bush, Ana. What's going on?" He asked seriously.

"A lot," I tried to joked, earning me a glare. "Alright alright. It's complicated," I said, debating on whether to actually tell him the truth or not. Chris always had a tendency to over react and I didn't want anything being mentioned about the engagement to anyone but my family, besides my dad of course.

"Don't give me that bullshit." He scoffed, knowing me too well.

"I'm serious, Chris. There's a lot going on right now and in time I'll be able to tell you."

"So you just go to New York and get engaged two weeks later? What the hell does that snake have you doing?" He persisted, referring to Diana.

"Chris, please."

He looked over to me and then back at the road heavily sighing. "*Fine*, but I want answers as soon as you get back for good."

I nodded. "You will,"

When we got to the diner we sat in our usual booth near the back in the corner. I slid on the cool black leather of the booth knowing my legs would soon stick to the material.

"Who we got here? Long time no see!" Susan, a waitress that's worked here longer than I've been alive.

"Hi, Susan. How are you?" I asked.

"Same ol' shit around here, Annie." She said, her voice raspy from the countless cigarettes she smoked. "Glad to see you 'round here, missy." She gave a warm smile and a pat on my shoulder.

"Wow, Sue, I never get a greeting like this." Chris joked.

She rolled her eyes. "I *like* Annie," with that she walked away.

"She didn't even take our order." Chris said with amusement.

No one would ever say it, but she was actually a terrible waitress. Her humor and kindness always brought people back though.

"So how have things been?" I asked.

He shrugged. "The same. I start a new teaching job at the middle school in a few weeks when school starts again." Chris had always wanted to be a teacher and he was definitely smart enough to be one.

"That's awesome, Chris." I said.

"Got to use my degree at some point I guess." He said with a smile.

I nodded. "You'll do great, you always do."

He gave a small smile and looked out the window onto the busy street. "I have to tell you something." He said, looking back at me.

I furrowed my eyebrows. "What?"

"When I saw you with that guy on the news... I was more than angry." He admitted. "I realized I was jealous and that... I want you back, Annie."

I cleared my throat awkwardly and folded my hands in my lap to twirl my thumbs Are each other. I was nervous and unsure how to respond. "Chris, I-I don't think that's a good idea." I mumbled. "Plus, I really am engaged." Even if I wasn't in this arrangement with Alex, I didn't want to get back together with a Chris. We had many clear differences in how we saw our lives. I knew that didn't change and I didn't want our friendship to be ruined. Though Nora would probably be *thrilled*.

He let out a jagged sigh. "Think about it? Please?"

I bit my bottom lip, not wanting to even consider it. "Okay," I lied.

Chris and I eventually ordered and luckily talked about *other* things. He soon drove me home and didn't bother sticking around since Alex was here now.

I got out of the car and opened the door, this time seeing people here. Julia was sat in the living room while I could see Nora in the kitchen.

"Hey," I said.

Julia turned to look over her shoulder before looking back at the TV. "Hey,"

"Where's Alexander?" I asked.

I wasn't trying to avoid him anymore. In fact, after hanging out with Chris I actually wanted to see Alex.

She pointed to the kitchen area so I walked over there but only saw Nora cooking something that smelled delicious. "Oh, hi, how was seeing your father?" She asked.

"It was great. I loved seeing him." I looked around the kitchen and down the hall. "Where's Alex?" I asked her.

"Oh, downstairs. He wanted to freshen up before dinner. Hungry?"

I shook my head. "No, I went to go get a late lunch with Chris." I turned to go down the basement stairs and heard the shower running.

I sat on the couch waiting for him to come out. I didn't know what time we were leaving tomorrow and I needed to know to see if I'd have enough time to see my dad again tomorrow.

Almost twenty minutes later Alex walked out, dressing in a pair of jeans and a casual, white t-shirt. His hair was still damp.

"You take the longest showers in all history." I said.

He smirked and walked over to me, plopping next to me on the couch. "It's good to see you too."

"Where'd you guys go?" I asked.

Alex raised his arm and slung it over the couch behind my head. We were sitting close enough to where our sides were pressing. "Nora wanted to show me around." He said.

I nodded. "Sorry, my family can be a bit much."

He shook his head. "I like them, they're good people." I felt his hand touch the back of my head. I glanced over my shoulder too see him twirling a piece of my hair between his fingers. "What did you do today?" He asked

"Well I saw my dad and that was really great. He's looking so much better."

He smiled. "That's great, Ana."

I nodded. "It is. I also met up with Chris and got lunch-"

"Chris?" He questioned? His tone lowered and eyebrows furrowed.

I nodded and leaned to the side slightly to create some sort of distance. "Yeah, we just talked." I don't know why I didn't want him thinking anything happened between Chris and I.

"What'd you talk about?" He asked, sounding unconvinced.

I shrugged. "Random things,"

"Like?"

I rolled my eyes. "I don't know, Alexander. Does it matter?"

He nodded, leaning his face closer to mine. "Everything you do matters to me."

My breath hitched in my throat at our closeness. His eyes had the same look in them as last night, but the scariest thing was is that I had the same look in mine. "Alex," I breathed out.

"Hm?" He hummed, inching closer until his lips hovered over mine. "I'm not going to kiss you," He said, taking me by surprise. "until you tell me to."

My eye lids fluttered slightly as I realized his words.

Until you tell me to.

I instinctively bit my bottom lip. "Kiss me," I whispered.

I felt Alex graze my lips with his before a boom sounded through the basement and the sound of rushing water. I pulled away immediately to see one of the water pipes burst open.

We basically jumped off the couch and ran over to where it was, covering it with anything we could get our hands on.

"Shit," I cursed as the now soaked towel I was issuing was no good.

"What happened?" I looked over to see Nora standing at the stairs, watching as the basement started to pool with water.

"Hold this," Alex said, handing over an abundance of towels he had gotten from the bathroom.

I fumbled with them, dropping one of them in the water. "This towel is almost soaked." I said. *I* was soaked at this point. My hair and face dripping with water.

Alex was knelt down in the water, messing with something down there. Well whatever he was doing worked because the water died down and then completely stopped. He stood up and shook out his hair, raking a hand back through it. "Well that was interesting."

I dropped the towels and moved my wet hair from my face. "That's one way of putting it."

"How in the world did this happen?" Nora was standing at the stairs still, looking over the basement which was not covered in water that was enough to make at least half of the room completely damped. The damage was done and I knew the carpets would and furniture would have to be replaced due to the fact that everything would mildew over soon.

I shrugged and looked around. "I'm not sure,"

She let out a sigh. "When It rains it pours."

"I'll have this fixed, don't worry." Alexander said, making Nora and I both look at him.

"I couldn't let you do that. This will be a pretty penny to fix." Nora said.

He shook his head. "It's the least I can do, please, I'm insisting."

"Alexander that is very kind, but, I'd feel terrible." Nora was never one to ask for help when she needed it, she was the strongest woman I know. Alexander offering to fix the basement was beyond words, but I understand where she's coming from. This was an expensive fix and even I'd be uncomfortable accepting that kind of money.

Alex shrugged. "Consider this already done, I'll speak with some people in the morning." He said, leaving no room to argue.

Nora gave him a small smile. "Thank you," She said before walking back upstairs. Knowing her she most likely felt over emotional and didn't want him seeing her like that.

"Alex, you didn't-"

He had grabbed the sides of my face and kissed me, cutting me off and surprising me yet again. But this kiss wasn't quick. It was slow and tender. His lips were soft yet firm on mine. His hands moved from me face and my waist, pulling me in closer. I raised my arms and wrapped them around his neck. My hands raked through it hair.

I felt his lips swipe across my bottom lip, but I didn't let him deepen the kiss. He tried a couple more times before groaning against my mouth. His hands squeezed my hips lightly before circling around and lowering to give my behind a squeeze causing me to gasp and ultimately letting him deepen the kiss.

I couldn't complain, it felt amazing to feel his tongue against mine as we continued kissing. But all too soon, he was the one to pull away, leaving us both panting. His lips were slightly swollen and I knew mine also had to be.

"If we keep going I won't be able to stop." He said.

I nodded, not really being able to respond. He left my head spinning and I felt weightless when I was around him. I didn't care about that deal or what would happen when we leave this soaking wet basement. All I cared about was right now and how perfect his body felt up against mine.

"Come on, let's go upstairs and get you in dry clothes." He said with a smirk.

I rolled my eyes, but walked up the stairs with him.

Nora had finished making spaghetti and set out plates for us. "Alexander, I know you were sleeping in the basement, but that no place for anyone to stay right now." She said.

He nodded. "It's not trouble, I can get a hotel room."

She shook her head. "No, no that won't be necessary. Annie, you can let Alexander stay in your room. We have a blow up mattress you can set up in there." *She has no idea what she's setting up...*

"Thank you, Nora." Alexander said before I could protest. He turned to me and gave me a wink that made me blush. I knew he was enjoying this.

~ > ~

"You're really going to make me sleep on the clothed air?"

I rolled my eyes. "It's an air mattress, Alex. And yes I am." I turned on the air and it slowly began lifting up.

He said something, but I couldn't understand him over the loud noise.

"What?" I said and he repeated, but I still couldn't understand. A moment later it was completely filled and I turned it off, sealing the mattress so it wouldn't lose any air. "Okay what did you say?"

He chuckled. "I said I will sleep on this thing with one condition."

I raised an eyebrow. "And that is?"

His smirk graced his face. "Sleep on it with me."

I scoffed and put my hands on my hips. "No,"

He stuck his lip up to pout as he attempted walking around the air mattress, but I took up so much space in my room there was little to no walkway room. His eyes narrowed. "You're lucky this is blocking everything."

I rolled my eyes, but smiled. "It really isn't that bad." I said, pushing down on the mattress. "Look," I got on the mattress laying down and smiling at him to encourage the idea of sleeping here. "see?"

He smirked and quickly laid beside me. "Hm," He hummed. "This could make it more comfortable." He swiftly stuck his arm under my head and brought me to his chest, turning me on my side so my head was laying on him. "Yes, much better."

I looked up to glare at him while he just smirked down at me. "Alex," I said warningly.

He raised an eyebrow. "Don't act like you're not enjoying this just as much as I am, babe."

My nose scrunched at the nickname, but it also gave me a warm feeling. "Don't call me that." I muttered.

"Oh sorry, I meant baby."

I rolled my eyes. I would never admit it, but he was very comfortable to lay on. He was warm and I definitely would be able to sleep here. "Alex, come on, I'm going over there." I tried getting up, but his arm pulled my closer to him.

He sighed. "Ana, just let me hold you tonight. I promise I won't do anything."

My heart was going to burst.

"Fine," I said, giving in. "but no funny business."

He nodded with a victory smile. "Deal,"

Hey you're probably real sick of these author's notes but here's another— ALL of the chapters are unedited and I know there are many mistakes and misspellings. These are basically first or second drafts, just keep that in mind! All your comments have been lovely and I appreciate the support. You guys are the best xx

ONE LAST THING

Alright stories with strong female leads— leave a comment!

Ok but also look at this photo. I don't know what it means but I'm dying. This shit is hilarious omg

Chapter Fifteen

Ok really quick and random question... does anyone else have a hard time reading a story in third person? I don't know why but I just can't do it lol idk ok happy reading (:

I woke up, not because of the sun shining too brightly in my room or my alarm blaring off somewhere, wherever my phone was. *No*. I woke up because the feeling of being *crushed* will do that to you.

My eyes opened and Alex was pretty much on top of me, his arm secured around my waist. I was laying on my back and I looked to the side to see the edges of the air mattress raised around us. The damn thing must've had a hole and deflated partially while we were sleeping.

I turned to my side, but that back fired. It felt as if I was on a water bed all while trying to get out of quick sand.

Those are *not* very good combinations.

But luckily for *Alex*, he apparently sleeps like the dead and was unphased by the motion of the air mattress raising and and sinking every time I moved.

I let a string of curse words out as I literally *rolled* off the damn thing and landed on the ground with a thud. I stood up and adjusted my shirt that had slightly risen up.

Well that was an interesting way to wake up.

I looked over at alex and covered my hand over my mouth to stop myself from laughing. He was sound asleep, laying in the middle of the almost deflated mattress. The edges were raised around him as he continued sleeping.

After gathering a change of clothes from my suitcase, I walked over to my door quietly, but looked back once to more to his sleeping state. We wouldn't have moments like today or yesterday once we left my
home. Everything would go back to how it was and only the deal that brought us together would be the main focus.

I closed my door behind me and went to use the bathroom across the hall so I wouldn't make too much noise to wake him. It was six am and we had to leave at eight for our flight back to New York. I wasn't ready to go back, but it was time. The time I spent here was nice and enough to carry me through until the holidays

I washed my face and brushed my teeth before putting in my makeup and putting my hair in a pony tail. I didn't feel like actually styling it, especially since the humidity of New York would frizz it out anyway.

I walked out and went back in the room to see Alex *still* sleeping. I bent down slightly and tried to tap his shoulder to wake him. He remained unmoving.

He might really be dead...

I shook his shoulder with a little more firmness. "Alex," *nothing.*

"Alex, wake up." I said, my voice above a whisper at this point.

Still nothing.

I rolled my eyes and shook him more. "Get your ass up." I said louder and when even that didn't do the trick, I began standing on the spots that had air to move his body even more.

With a loud groan, his eyes opened as he was being jostled around by the mattress of doom. "Ugh stop," he groggily demanded, his morning voice raspy and low.

"Come on, we have to leave in an hour." I crossed my arms over my chest.

He turned to face me, his handsome face had a lazy smile while his eyes looked up at me with amusement. "I think a kiss would really motivate me to get up."

The smug bastard.

I jumped once more on the air pocket, sending him off the mattress and onto the floor. "Fine, no kiss." He grumbled as he lifted himself off the floor. He stood up and started stretching, every muscle flexing nearly making me drool.

Snap out of it, Anastasia!

I shook my head slightly to snap myself out of my trance his biceps had put me in and turned to go downstairs.

Nora was awake and had coffee made which I was more than thankful for. She was so cute in her blue fluffy robe she's had since I was young. "Good morning," she greeted.

"Morning," I poured myself a cup of coffee and turned back to her.

"What time do you leave?" She asked.

"Whenever Alexander finishes getting ready." I sadly answered. My face fell as I thought about leaving them all again.

Nora gave me a reassuring smile. "You'll be home soon, dear. I wasn't sure about you staying with Diana, but I am about Alexander. He seems like a really nice man and unlike your mother."

I nodded. "He is," He is very much unlike Diana.

~ > ~

We said our goodbyes and pulled up to the airport shortly after leaving. After boarding Alexander went into work mode taking numerous amount of calls and writing things down. I guess these two days were a vacation for him also since I didn't see him make phone call. He continued going through paper work and talking to random people until we arrived back in the city.

As we stepped off the plane the humidity hit me and it was almost suffocating.

"How on earth are you wearing a suit?" I asked Alex after we got into the car. He was sitting close next to me.

He shrugged. "I'm used to this humidity. Besides, I don't spend much time outside."

"Well that isn't good either." I said giving him a pointed look.

He was about to respond, but my phone went off stopping him from continuing. I looked down to see Diana's name. I groaned and he gave me a look of confusion.

"Diana," I said to him before answering. "Hello?"

"Anastasia, where have you been? Alexander has been ignoring me for three days now." Her voice high pithed with anger.

I rolled my eyes. "He's with me here, but we've been busy."

"I don't care to hear about you whoring yourself out to this man. All I care about is that you'll keep your end of the bargain."

I felt anger rise in me and my breathing got heavier. I was about to reply, but the phone was taken away from me. I looked over at Alex and his jaw was tight and eyebrows furrowed.

"I'm sorry, Diana, I don't think you realize who you're talking to. As long as your *daughter* is staying with *me* she will *not* be spoken to in that way whatsoever. If you'd like me to keep up *my* side of our deal I think you ought to get a grip and not have any casual communication with Anastasia. Any more questions? No? Goodbye." He hung up and handed the phone back to me.

"Thank you," I said quietly.

He gave me a small smile as he reached to take my hand in his. "Don't thank me, Anastasia. No one should be talked to the way that woman does."

I nodded and looked out the window the rest of the car ride with my hand remaining in his.

We pulled up to the apartment building and through the tinted windows of the car I saw the paparazzi standing at the entrance. I groaned and the car came to a stop.

Alexander looked back at me with a small reassuring smile. "Ready?"

I shook my head. "No, but I don't think I'll ever be."

The door was opened and the flashes began. I was pulled through

the photographers, but came to a halt when my arm was yanked back and my hand slipped from Alexander's.

"Smile!" One of the photographers shouted as he took a photo of me, his hand still grasping my wrist.

"Get off-" I said, trying to pull his grip off.

"Come on, princess, one smile." He coped creepily.

Before I knew what was happening, Alexander had the guy by his collar as he pushed him away from me and swung a fist that collided with the photographers face sending him straight to the ground.

My eyes went wide, but I didn't have time to react before I was being pulled inside the building. I was surrounded by Alex and four other bodyguards as we went in the elevator.

"I want all the information on that fucker!" Alexander growled. I'd never seen him so angry. "I'll kill him," he said to one of his men.

I shook my head and slipped my hand in his, trying to calm him down. "Please, it's fine, I'm okay." I assured. I was shaken up from the whole thing. It was suffocating being surrounded by those people and when that guy grabbed on to me I didn't know what to do.

The elevator doors opened and we walked out, he was leading me, his hand not letting go of mine. "It's not okay, Anastasia." He said with seriousness. "Find out who he is, now." Alexander snapped at Scott. They all left, leaving us alone.

I sighed. "Really, I'm alright-"

"Will you quit saying that?" He said through clenched teeth.

My eyes went wide and I took a step back from him.

He let out a sigh and his facial features softened. "I'm sorry—"

"You should be," I said firmly, my arms crossed. "I know you have a lot going on right now, Alexander, but you can't explode on me because *you* get pissed off." I didn't know why, but I was suddenly feeling very emotional. Whenever I got worked up, out of anger *or* sadness, I cried. It's like I needed to stay on an emotional scale between 3-7. Any high I was crying, any lower I was crying. "The last thing you need to do is worry about me. I can handle myself, I'm not here to be a *burden* for you to carry." I did feel slightly guilty since he'd now be in charge of not only protecting his image from the press, but mine as well. Marriage was his idea, but after seeing my dad my heart softened a little more for Alex. He showed me a side I didn't think could exist. A side that was normal and kind.

Though I said I could protect myself, I knew that was the farthest thing from the truth. I couldn't protect myself against anyone pretty much. I couldn't even get my arm out of some sleezeball's grip trying to take a photo of me!

"What?" He asked, sounding shocked. "Ana, what are you talking about?" He asked, coming over to stand directly in front of me.

I looked away from his gaze. "I don't know, I- I don't even know." I whispered out, flustered and jet lagged at this point.

His hands cupped my cheeks, lifting my face up to meet his eyes. "You are *not* a problem, those idiots outside are. I shouldn't have gotten angry like that, but when I saw him grab you..." his jaw tightened once again but then released. "I saw red and all I could think about was not letting you get hurt."

I don't know why, but I couldn't help the stray tears streak down. I was embarrassed and turned my back to him to wipe my eyes. "I'm sorry," I sniffled.

His hand touched my shoulder, gently turning me back around and he brought me into his chest for a hug. "Please don't cry,"

I sniffled again. "I can't help it, I'm emotional and tired." I said against his chest.

He chuckled and caressed the back of my hair. "Come on, you need to rest."

I shook my head and wiped away any last tears. "I can't take naps because I won't be able to sleep tonight and then I'll be late for work in the morning." I said, stressed. Naps never worked out in my favor.

He smirked. "Well I know your boss and he's pretty awesome so I don't think he'll mind."

I rolled my eyes and took a step back. "I'm okay,"

He nodded. "Good,"

I lifted my phone to see my reflection and I looked terrible. My eyes were slightly red for crying while my mascara was almost non existent on my lashes. I put my phone down to see Alex just looking at me. "What?" I asked.

He had a half smile on his lips. "Nothing, you're just beautiful."

I blushed and looked the other way. "Shut up," I muttered.

He laughed and shook his head. "Well that's one way of accepting a compliment."

I'm a little stressed because I have literally re-written the next chapter probably three times. Like completely changed plots each time. I'm excited, but nervous to show it to you because lemme just say... it's a game changer. Ok, ok I'm sorry I'll stop. Thank you guys so much for reading, commenting, and voting!!! I love looking through to see what you guys have to say. I try and reply to most of them so if you've got a question or just something to say leave it below! I'm all for CONSTRUCTIVE criticism. Don't be an asshat and I won't be one to you(:

Ok also look at this meme lmao

Chapter Sixteen

It's been a week since we came back to the city and what a crazy week it's been. Ever since we announced our engagement Alexander has had more calls and offers since they would assume Dimitri's company would now be affiliated with Alexander's. I didn't understand the whole business aspect of us getting married, but I was just keeping up my end of the bargain and going along with it. As long as my father was being cared for that's all that mattered to me.

Alexander and I had just finished a couple meetings so I was in the middle of sorting through his papers many papers. I turned in the rolling chair and opened the filing cabinet drawer to pull out some papers for tomorrow's meeting. I set Hey them on my desk and started sorting through all of them. He needed specific ones of course. After going through a little more than half the pile, I came across the envelope with '*PRIVATE*' written across it I had put in there almost a month ago with full intent of returning it back to Alexander, but forgot.

I bit my bottom lip, debating on whether or not I should open it.

Maybe it wasn't a mistake? I tried to convince myself that this was a good idea and there'd be no consequences. I mean, what's the worst that could be in there?

That was enough reasoning for me.

I looked around the room, making sure I wasn't being watched. I opened the top of it, pulling the papers from their envelope. I looked at the first page and read it.

Pictures, notes, and other papers against Dimitri Sterling and Diana Sterling are all in this file. Keep in mind that these were taken over the course of a year and seven months. Any further questions you know where to reach me.

My eyebrows furrowed in confusion as I began flipping through the pages. The next few pages had photographs in a bundle that nearly fell to the ground. I set the rest of the papers down and looked through the photos. They were mainly of Dimitri walking in and out of various places, often looking extremely sketchy. My mother was in a few of the photographs as well.

I nearly gasped when I saw the photo of me. I was in Arizona, at a restaurant my friends and I often went to. In the photo I was

laughing, surrounded by Kayla and my friend, Tom. I remember that night, it was a little over a year ago. A bunch of us had gotten together since we were about a month away from graduating college.

I continued flipping though and seeing more photos of *me.* They were pictures of me going to work, talking to people, even entering my home. I felt overwhelmed as I continued looking and even had to stop.

W*hy does he have all these?*

I shook my head, furious. I needed an explanation, now. I collected all the photos and papers, swinging the door open to his office. He was sat at his desk, now looking up at me with confusion on his stupid handsome face.

"What the hell are these?" I questioned sharply, tossing all the files in front of him on the desk.

He looked down at the photos, picking them up and sighing. "Ana-"

"Don't *Ana* me. Tell me," I demanded.

He sighed and stood from his desk to walk around, standing a few feet away from me. "These weren't for you to see."

I scoffed. "You're really not helping yourself."

He shook his head and pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration. "No, I mean, well yes these weren't for you to see, but I meant this wasn't meant to be weird or anything." He fumbled with his words making me even more skeptical. "This file was about Dimitri. He has something that he loves to hold against me, Anastasia. I needed a leverage,"

His words hurt and only confirmed my fears. "You really are using me. All the bullshit compliments and you.. you k-kissing me? What are you trying to pull?" I spat. I wanted to slap him at this point. I didn't know if I'd be able to stay here with him after all of this.

"No, Ana, listen to me." He walked over to me, his hands grasping at my arms.

I tried to step away from his grip, but he held on tighter almost bringing me into his chest. "Let go," I said, trying to sound strong.

He shook his head. "Please, I wasn't and I would never use you."

"Then why do you have all those photos of me? What did you want to know?"

"I needed to know Dimitri's weakness, but I knew that wasn't you." He said. "It's Collin, but I'd never use your brother like that. He's just a child."

"What does Dimitri have over you?" I asked, searching for something to redeem him from my thoughts.

He let go of me to rake a hand through his hair. "I told you my parents were from France." He started and I nodded. "Well thirty years ago it was much easier to migrate to America. My mother and father did it, but years later something went wrong with their visa's and my father did something very illegal." He turned away from me and rubbed the side of his face.

"He was just starting the company and returning back to France really wasn't an option. He went through these men that made it appear that him and my mom were actual citizens, basically stating that they were born and raised here. Recently, and I have no idea how, but Dimitri got ahold of that information. Most likely because Dimitri doesn't hang around men you'd ever want to know." Alex's voice was strained and his facial features furrowed from his frustration. "If Dimitri releases the files, that it. The company will be gone and all my parents work will be for nothing. They'll be forced to go back and won't be allowed to return."

I shook my head, disgusted that Dimitri would even threaten to do this. "This is horrible. Alex, I am so sorry."

"But I needed you to marry me, not to merge the companies, but to keep him from doing that to my family. I have no intention of hurting you. In fact I've grown quite fond of you." He said with a small smile. "I care about you, Ana." His warm hands now held mine. "and if Diana pulls the deal, I'll pay for your father's treatment anyway. No offense but your mother and her husband are terrible people."

I laughed lightly and nodded. "Yeah they are," Alexander was thrown into a mess just as I was with the Sterling family. It was time to put an end to it all. "What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I have a plan," he started. "Once we're married I plan on fully taking over Sterling Enterprises."

I raised an eyebrow. "How do you intend on doing that?"

He smirked. "I have this," he let go of my hands and opened a drawer in his desk, pulling out a file and handing it to me. "open it." He said.

I looked up at him before looking back down at the file. They were bank accounts from too many places to count. Not only with his name, but my mother's and Collin's. "What are all these?" I asked.

"He's filling these accounts illegally from selling drugs in South America."

My eyes went wide. "He's what?!"

Alex pointed to the one with Collin's name. "He's using your brother's and mother's name to cover up his own ass. The people he has working for him fill his bank account and he takes the money."

"This is insane," I breathed out as I continued flipping through all the pages. There were at least fifty different accounts. "But if you hold this over him won't he just release the information about your parents?"

He shook his head. "This is a game of who draws first."

I shook my head, closing the file. "This is a dangerous game, Alex. The people he's associated with could come after you."

He smirked. "You're worried about me?"

I rolled my eyes. "Yeah sorry if I don't want you to die."

He chuckled. "I'll be okay, I'll up my security."

"This really is crazy. Does Diana know?"

"No, and she won't know. That woman can't keep a secret to save her life."

I nodded in agreement. "Well, I'm glad you have a plan at least." I was trying to find something positive.

His hands gripped my hips and brought me closer to him. "Don't worry, Ana. This is all a mess, but it's *my* mess."

I looked at him with obvious worry. "Please be careful."

He raised his hand to tuck a strand of hair behind my ear. "I will," most people would be assured by his promise of being okay, but I wasn't. I knew my mother and how heartless she could be. Dimitri isn't any different and might even be worse.

Alexander started leaning forward and I felt his minty breath fan over my face, taking me out of my thoughts. "What are you doing?" My voice barely above a whisper. His close proximity made any rational thoughts disappear.

"This," with that he leaned down to kiss me. It had been too long since we kissed. I missed the feel of him being so close to me. I didn't want to think about anything going on right now. I didn't want to think about anything but this moment right now.

But a knock on the door brought me back to reality and I pulled away.

"Were always being interrupted." He groaned pecking my lips one more time before adjusting his tie and walking over to open the doors. He was handed some papers and the door shut. "Now, where were we?" He asked, reaching out for me

I swatted his hands and smiled. "Not here," I scolded.

He smirked. "You didn't have a problem with it a minute ago.

I rolled my eyes and turned to walk away. "Get back to work, Mr. Knight."

He gave me a wink before I shut the door to his office.

Ooooooo some crazy stuff is about to go down (:

Also I thought this was hilarious lmao

Chapter Seventeen

I'm having a bit of writer's block so forgive me for this filler chapter ❤ xx

I opened the oakwood door to Alex's spacious office and saw him sat behind the desk looking down at something while tapping his pen against the wooden desk. Since I've been here there weren't many times where Alex hasn't been working. Work consumed him nearly whole as he was also always talking or messaging people about *work*.

He noticed me come in a moment later as the door softly hit against the door stop mounted on the wall near the floor. His head lifted, revealing his tired eyes and his frown that wasn't out of anger. He looked *exhausted*. He muttered a quick hello before going back to whatever he was doing.

I walked across the floor to one of the black leather seats that sat across from his desk. Crossing one leg over the other, I sat back in the chair. "What are you working on?" I asked, hoping he wouldn't mind the random question. I didn't want to admit to him that I wanted to know more about the whole *Dimitri situation*. I knew he was a bad person, but this was more than I thought he'd even be capable of.

He let out a long sigh, dropping the pen to rake a hand through his dark hair that was in need of a haircut. It nearly fell to his nose when he had looked up. "A lot," was his too simple of an answer.

I narrowed my eyes at him and huffed. "Very informative, *thank you*."

He softly chuckled as he leaned back into his chair, swiveling slightly. "I really don't think you want to know." His words sounding more like a warning.

I gave him a pointed look with a raised eyebrow. "Try me, Drama Queen."

"First off,"He started as he sat up in his seat, folding his hands on his desk. "I'm not a drama queen." His statement made me chuckle. I guess he just *needed* to clarify that. "Second— I'm finishing the last of the arrangements needed for another business event I know you'll be *so* exited for." His lips lifted into an innocent looking smile.

I groaned, leaning my head back. "Why another?" I complained. I looked back up to meet his eyes filled with amusement as mine

were full of dread no doubt.

His wide playful smile turned into a small reassuring one "This one in particular is more important than the others. All of the investor's come together to basically network and meet people. It happens once a year."

I crossed my arms over my chest. "I feel bad for anyone truly married to someone in this industry considering they must own a thousand gowns by now." I've only been here for two months and own more dresses I know what to do with.

He raised an eyebrow and smirked at me. "Most woman would *love* to own a thousand gowns." His voice questioning.

I shrugged. "Most woman don't have *need* one gown, let alone a thousand. Believe it or not, but living amongst rich assholes isn't what everyone desires." I pointed out to remind him of how he *isn't* most people and neither were the people he was surrounded by. Most people had to work for everything they've got. Not to say Alex doesn't work hard , but he's certainly been given the comfort of living lavishly his whole life from his parents original accomplishments.

He nodded and stood from his chair to walk over to the front of his desk. He rested against it as one ankle crossed the other. "How about a pant suit for
Friday?" He jokingly offered.

Did this man listen to anything I just said?

I rolled my eyes but smiled. "How kind of you to offer, but *no*, Alex, I'm not wearing a pant suit."

He smiled and shook his head lightly. "You're unlike most woman in my world, Anastasia."

I said an eyebrow, challenging him. "Is this a good or a bad thing?"

He tapped on his chin as he bent his head to the side slightly. "Hmm... I'm still trying to figure that out myself."

"Well let me know when you do. In the mean time I've got to go on an invtericew with Diana tomorrow." I brought up my plans suddenly remembering. I had meant to tell him yesterday, but after everything happened with finding those files I completely forgot.

"Interview?" He questioned.

I nodded. "Yup," popping the 'p'. "I guess the New York Times wants to do a piece on us." I said, repeating Diana's words. I highly doubted that the interview was their idea. My mother probably asked them if they would. When she and Dimitri got married they were all over magazines and gossip shows. This was her one shot to get her fifteen minutes of fame back.

"Be weary of everything they say, Ana." He said seriously while

rubbing the side of his jaw in annoyance. "You haven't even trained for interviews. This is ridiculous," He declared as he began pacing with slow steps.

"Trained?" What on earth would I have to train for? "I'm not a damn circus monkey." I snapped.

His pacing stopped and he turned to me. "Some of these interviews will have you on a string saying things you'd never thought you'd say. They provoke and prod to get any details they want."

Just wonderful.

"What time?" He asked quickly.

"Four *freaking* am." No one should ever be awake this early. If I ever become president I'm making it a law.

He mumbled something under his breath I didn't catch before turning his head to look at me. "There isn't much time to prepare you then. *Please* just take what I said seriously." Alex nearly begged as he walked, now kneeling in front of me, his eyes on mine.

I nodded and took his hand that rested beside my knee, giving it a quick squeeze. "If Diana is with me I probably won't get to say a word anyway." I joked, attempting to put his worry at ease.

He chuckled and brought my hand to his lips, leaving a kiss on top. "Well that's reassuring,"

"I'll let you get back to work." I said awkwardly as his hand still held mine. Moments like these made me not know how to feel about Alexander. I trusted him, which is saying a lot. I wouldn't necessarily call him a friend, but he was more than an acquaintance. The sweet moments I've shared with Alex are enough to make me blush, but they also scared me. I didn't want to open up to him fully because I was terrified of having my heart broken.

"Go on a date with me tonight." He said, taking me by surprise. Alex and I usually ate dinner together, but it was odd hearing him actually ask me on a *date.*

*"*A *date*?" I asked, saying the word as if it were poison. It had been a long time since I was out one of those. These past few years I'd been so focused finishing my degree that I never made time for anyone, let alone some boy that would most likely only want one thing.

He chuckled and then smirked. "Yes, a date." He confirmed.

I laughed awkwardly, not really knowing what to say. I had my fears wanting me to say no, but I couldn't deny liking him. He was nice to be around especially since everyone I'd met otherwise we're terrible. "I don't know—"

"It's just a dinner, Anastasia." He reasoned calmly, his tone almost sweet. "I won't bite," He promised with a glint of mischief in his

eyes. "*hard,"*

I rolled my eyes at him. "You're crazy,"

"For you," He said, his eyes darkening. His hands gripped both arm rests as he pushed himself up to lean closer into me.

My hand went up to his chest, the materiel of his crisp white shirt underneath my touch. I pushed slightly, stopping him from inching any closer like I knew he had planned to do. "Alex," I said warningly.

The small smirk and eyes not leaving my lips said to me that he knew exactly what he was doing. "Hmm?" He hummed innocently.

The smell of his minty breath mixed with his smell of sandalwood and fresh linen captivated me, only making me want to draw him in closer. My subconscious's feelings got the better of me and I decided to do something I normally would.

I was going to beat him at his own game.

I put on a smirk of my own and leaned forward to where my lips grazed his jaw line causing him to intake a sharp breath. My hand lightly touched the back of his neck, lightly gripping the hair towards the end of his hairline.

"Ana," He nearly growled out. I'd never admit it out loud, but I loved getting a reaction from him.

I took my bottom lip in with my teeth to stop the smile that threatened to appear. I wouldn't be giving in this early. "Yes?" I asked with the same innocent tone he had before.

I knew he wouldn't let me have control for long. Soon he had me leaning back against the chair as his head dipped down to my neck, leaving a kiss near my collarbone. "You're playing a *very* dangerous game." He whispered against my skin, sending chills through my body.

He was the predator and I was his prey.

"I like games," I quipped, nearly whispering.

His head lifted up so his eyes could meet mine. "Is that so?" He inquired with a lazy smile.

I nodded and began to trail my hand from the back of his neck, to his shoulders, down his arms, and across his chest. I watched him tense under my touch, his eyes never leaving mine. I let my hand wonder down, feeling his toned abs under my hand. Once I got to his navel, Alex's hand quickly reached down to bring mine back up. "Something wrong?" I innocently asked, teasing him with a smile.

He eyes were darkened with lust as his gaze went from my eyes down to my chest. "Yes," His voice was husky. I didn't get to reply as we were quickly reversed in positions. His hands had gripped my hips so that he was now sitting in the chair with my legs on either side of his, straddling him. "The problem, my dear Anastasia, is that

it's been entirely too long since I last kissed you." His hands reached out to cup my face, bringing me to him as his lips were placed on mine.

Something about this kiss was different. He kissed me with passion as his lips moved slowly against mine. It was almost as if he were savoring every moment. One of his arms snakes around my waist, pulling me impossibly close and his hand resting on my lower back. His other hand was tangled in my hair, sometimes softly pulling and running his hands through it.

I kissed him back with just as much tenderness, my hands both in his amazingly thick hair that every girl only dreamed of having. I noticed every time I'd gently tug on the ends a low groan came from him.

Surprisingly, Alex was the one to break our kiss, leaving us panting. He leaned his forehead on mine and swiped my swollen lip with the pad of his thumb. "If you keep moving your hips like that I don't think I'll be able to stop." He breathed out.

I blushed profusely, not realizing that I was basically *dry humping* the man.

His chuckle didn't help anything. He tucked the hair behind my ear and lifted my chin back slightly to make eye contact with me. "Don't be embarrassed in front of me, Ana. I'd be a liar to say I didn't enjoy it." He confidently said with a smile.

I groaned and got off his lap to adjust my shorts and shirt that had risen up slightly. "I've got to, uh, call Julia." I lied. I just needed to make something up to get out of this office with him.

He nodded, a small and knowing smile on his face. "Was us making out a yes to dinner?" He smugly asked.

I rolled my eyes, but nodded. "Yes, "

His eyes lit up in victory. "Meet you in living room at six."

I laughed. "Sounds like a plan,"

"Sounds like a date," he quipped.

Hey guys look at this. I'm dying omg. I love stupid stuff like this tbh

Chapter Eighteen

Ok this is random, but I'm excited to finish this story up because I'm actually working on a new one! I'm writing as many chapters right now for that one so it'll be ready to get when this is finish. On the note of talking about finishing this story— there's probably only 12-15 chapters left! I appreciate all of the support you guys have given me. This is the first story I've written since I was like sixteen back in 2013. You guys are awesome!!

It was very early, *too* early. I just arrived at my mother's house for the interview that I was no where near prepared for. I walked up the large stone steps that lead to her door. Before I had the chance to knock the large door was opened. I entered and Diana was walking down the stairs, looking completely ready in her beautiful, navy blue, cocktail dress.

She looked at me disapprovingly, her mouth turned downwards. "*What* are you wearing?" Disgust clear in her tone as she eyed me up and down.

I looked down at the simple black maxi dress I had thrown on this morning. I didn't know how to dress for anything like this. "Clothes," I stupidly answered to just to get under her skin.

She rolled her eyes at me and went to reach for my arm, but I took a step back. "Well come on, you need to *really* get dressed." She turned to walk up the stairs, her heels clicking against the floor.

I followed her up the stairs and into the bedroom I was supposed to be staying in when I first arrived. There was a hanging rack across the room with a few dresses hung up. I walked over to it and examined each one. I arched a brow when seeing each of them. They were all very *her*.

I looked back to my mother as she was approaching me. "I like that blue one," she pointed to the dress most similar to hers.

"Of course you do," I muttered under my breath. I turned the rack again. I looked through each one again and notice the two piece outfit that hung on a hanger together. It was a blushed tone top with a floral printed skirt that seemed to be more form fitting. I grabbed the hanger and slung the clothes in front of me to view it in the mirror. "What about this one?"

She walked over to me, standing behind as she looked at me

through the mirror with a slight tilt to her head. "It's not as nice as the blue one, but it'll do." She said before walking away. "I'll be back in an hour." She called out before closing the door.

I was left with her hairdresser and makeup artist to get completely done up. I was surprised at how quickly they were able to get it done. But her hairdresser, Molly, was much snobbier than I'd like to deal with at this time. She kept making comments about, and I quote, my "dull brown hair".

When they left I quickly got dressed. I finished zipping the skirt up and walked over to the mirror to examine myself. My hair was in big curls that framed my face. My makeup was stunning, the eyeliner slightly winged. She put on a nude lipstick with just a little bit of gloss. The outfit itself was gorgeous. I slipped on my nude heels, completing the look.

I walked out the room and down the stairs. Camera men and other people carry equipment were coming into the house, setting up in the living room. I followed the trail of people that lead me to my mother. She was talking with some woman, using her fakest nice voice as she smiled sweetly. I resisted the urge to roll my eyes as I approached her.

"Oh, Anastasia, this is Lydia Clark, New York Time's head editor." She introduced.

Lydia was an older woman, maybe upper 50's, but she was beautiful. Her skin was hardly wrinkled and her complexion was completely clear. She looked to be from a Hispanic decent, assuming because of her medium skin tone. Her dark brown, almost black, hair didn't have a single hint of grey. It was cut into a bob with layers framing her heart shaped face.

I offered a small smile and extended me hand. "Very nice to meet you."

She returned the smile, shaking my hand. "Pleasures mine, I'm so happy to hear about your rekindling relationship with your mother here." She said happily, looking between the two of us. It almost seemed like she wanted to get some type of reaction to see if we were really as close as Diana said.

I nodded, keeping the look of fake happiness on my face. "Me too,"

"Shall we get started?" She offered.

Diana nodded. "Yes, of course."

"Great, let me grab Sarah, she'll be interviewing the both of you." Lydia said, much to my relief. I was glad she wasn't going to be the one basically interrogating us.

As soon as Lydia walked away, Diana took a step next to me to lean closer to speak. "Don't let that smile falter, Anastasia." She

whispered harshly. "And remember to lie if you have to." The advice of a true snake.

A few moments later we were sat on the couch with Sarah across from us sitting in an arm chair. She was younger, maybe just slightly older than I. Her green business dress was eye catching and complimented her fair skin tone. Her ginger hair was curled and she looked like she should be the one being interviewed.

"Five... four... three... two... one..." the camera man pointed at Sarah as she kept a smile on her face, facing the camera.

"Welcome to New York Post online where we bring you the latest stories. I'm sitting here now with Diana Sterling, wife of the man that needs to introduction, Dimitri Sterling."

Oh please kill me.

"I'm also sitting here with Anastasia, Diana's daughter, someone that has been missing in her life for too long." She said. The camera turned to face us now and I folded my hands in front of me, resisting the urge to twirl my thumbs. I was nervous to say the least.

"Diana, I'm so happy to hear you've reconnected." Sarah said, starting the interview.

Diana gave a wide smile. "Me too, Sarah. It's been too long without my sweet girl." She reached to hold my hand in hers. Her hand was cold on mine and suddenly made me miss Alexander and the way his were warm.

"Can you tell us what happened?" Sarah continued.

My mother's wide smile now turned to a sad, fake one. "Unfortunately the marriage between her father and I turned abusive." My eyes went wide as the words escaped her mouth. Was she really saying this right now for everyone to hear? "There was no love and I wanted to leave with my sweet Annie, but he took her and I wasn't able to find her. Until now," she looked over at me with fake admiration.

I looked into the cold eyes of this wretched human and found nothing but evil.

"Oh my gosh, that is horrible. Anastasia, tell us about your father." Sarah practically begged. I bet she wasn't expecting a story like this.

I knew I sure as hell wasn't...

My mother was silently pleading I'd go along with her story. I tore my eyes to look at Sarah who had absolutely no idea what the truth was, it she was slicing it.

I blanked for a moment, not knowing what to say. If I deny it, this will ruin Diana completely and our deal. Although Alexander had agreed to pay for everything I just couldn't let him do that. He'd

already done enough with helping us with our house. But if I went along, my father would forever be known as an abuser. I couldn't take that chance or let her do this to him. There was no reason. We were supposed to be talking about reuniting, not making up some story about my father being abusive, which couldn't be farther from the truth. He was a hard working and loving man that was *with* an abusive woman who only thought of herself.

"He was very loving and caring." I started, by Sarah's expression I could tell she was surprised. "I don't know what went on with my parents because they never fought in front of me." I partially lied. I don't know the complete back story of how their marriage crashed and burned. "But never was I abused. Being reunited with my mother has been a blessing in my life." *Well that was painful to say.* "I know my mother was young when she had me and we all make mistakes when we're young. I don't know what my father has said and I don't know what she's said to my father, but I know I love them each very much." I attempted to salvage what my mother was trying to ruin. I don't know if I said the wrong thing and made it worse or did nothing at all. I could only hope that everything would be okay after this.

The rest of the interview was painfully long with back and forth questions regarding the apparent abuse my mother suffered, but thankfully, didn't go into detail about.

Probably because it's a damn lie.

After everyone had left we were the only ones left in the house. I went upstairs to pack my belongings, quickly shoving everything into a bag. The door opening made me glance up, but I turned my head to continue packing when I saw it was Diana.

"You did well, Anastasia." She sickeningly compliment.

I stood up straight and my face mimicked how shocked at her words I was. "I did well? You sick bitch!" I exclaimed, throwing a shoe that hit the wall making her flinch. "What the hell was that?!" I snapped, feeling the warm tears filling in my eyes. I wasn't sad, I was angry, beyond angry.

"Calm down, Anastasia!" She looked scared as she tried to find the confidence in her voice. "We had to give them something—"

"*That* was cruel." My voice low and serious as I continued glaring at the pathetic woman in front of me. "My father was never abusive and you know it!"

"You don't know anything!" She yelled back.

"Oh yeah?" I asked, letting out a non humorous laugh. "Tell me then why don't you? Tell me how uncaring and awful he is."

She looked to be at a loss of words. "Your father didn't give a damn about me."

I shook my head. "And you didn't give a damn about me." I said.

"I couldn't stay there, Anastasia. He worked so much and didn't once ask how *I* was. His wife!"

"Are you hearing yourself? He worked as much as he did to provide for us." I tried to reason, but it was pointless. "You wanted someone to wait on you hand and feet, giving you endless attention."

She scoffed. "That is *not* what I wanted."

"Yes it is," I countered. "And you found that in Dimitri. He showered you with attention and *things."* I spat, thinking about the letters I found from him when my mother left. Actually my dad found them. I'd never seen him so broken before, but after that day we never really mentioned Diana again. "But look where that got you. Sure you have nice things and money, but what about happiness or love? Even in that little boy, my brother, you weren't able to find happiness." I wanted to stop, but I couldn't. All the things I've wanted to say to her these past years built up and needed to be released. "You're a cold woman, Diana. I want *nothing* to do with you."

"Anastasia, we had a deal—" that's all she could think about.

"I'm well aware of our deal," I sneered, cutting her off. "I'll still be in New York for the remainder of the deal because *you* pawned your own daughter off." Not that I minded being with Alexander now, but she had no problem handing me over to someone else.

She filled and looked down at the floor for a moment before looking back at me. "I'm sorry you feel this way."

I rolled my eyes. "I'm *sure* you do." I grabbed the bag that was sitting on the ground. "Goodbye," I walked out, my shoulder brushing against hers as I left.

Ok I'm gonna make a playlist for this story and if you guys wanna listen to it that's coooool but if not it's totally cool lol. I'm going to release it by the 19th or 20th chapter. I haven't decided.

Hey here's a meme that really touches my heart

Chapter Nineteen

I returned back to the house and when the elevators opened I saw Alexander standing in the living room talking with someone. He smiled as he saw me and gave a quick goodbye to the person on the other end. "How was it?" He asked, approaching me.

I dropped my bag at my feet and hurriedly went over to him, basically jumping in his arms as I wrapped my arms around his waist, resting my head on his chest. I found myself yearning for his touch that comforted me. Especially when it came to my family. "I missed you," I said, disregarding his question. I didn't want to even think about what happened today.

His arms wrapped around me and his head rested on the top of mine. His chest rose in fell as he let out a breath of what seemed to be contentment. "That bad?" He knowingly asked.

I grunted, nuzzling into his warmth. "You have no idea," I said.

We stayed like this was a few moments before I pulled back from his warmth. I kicked off my heels, leaving them in the middle of the room. I walked over to the kitchen and heard Alex follow me.

I reached for the wine, not bothering for a cup. I pulled the cork and drank from the bottle.

"You're worrying me. What did she say?" He asked as he walked over to me. Alex took the bottle away before I was able to take another drink, setting it behind him on the island counter.

"She tried to destroy my father's name!" I exclaimed. "Diana lied and said he was abusive towards her, but that couldn't be true. My dad doesn't have a mean bone in his body." I defended, not really needing to though.

Alex shook his head, not seeming surprised. "Why the hell would she try and pull something like that?"

I threw my arms in the air. "Who knows? It's Diana we're talking about. That woman could grow a second head and I don't think I'd be shocked."

My hands held my forehead as I tried to think of just one reason she would do something like this.

But I couldn't come up with a damn thing.

Gently hands rubbed the sides of my arms before gently bringing me in for a tight embrace. "It's going to be okay." Alex comforted.

I wish he was right, but that story is going to be everywhere by

Monday. My father's reputation was on the line. I tried to hard to shield him from what was happening here, but it seemed that no matter what I did he would end up being hurt in some way.

"This is all my fault." I muttered. I tried pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth to stop the tears that brimmed in my eyes, but it was no use. Warm tears streamed down my cheeks.

Alex's hand smoothed circles on my back and he kissed the top of my head. "It's not, *none* of this is your fault." He pulled away slightly to look at me. I tried to turn my head but his hand caught my chin, turning me back to him. "Please don't cry," his other hand released my waist and came to wipe away any tears that were left.

I sniffled, attempting to stop. "I'm s—" before I could finish my apology his lips were on mine. I stood there unmoving for a moment before kissing him back. One of his hands held my waist while the other cupped my cheek. I wrapped my arms around him neck, pulling him closer. His lips moved against mine, tender and slow. I was relishing in the way his lips felt against mine— like they belonged. Our bodies molded together perfectly as he leaned into me.

Alexander had his hands on the back of my thighs as he lifted me into the counter, never breaking our kiss. I instinctively wrapped my legs around his torso feeling *everything.*

He tugged on the shirt I was wearing that was now untucked from the skirt due to his rough movements. His hand went underneath and settled on my ribs. The warmth of his hand sending chills through my body.

His other hand went to the back of my head, lightly tugging on my hair making softly moan into our kiss. He pulled away, panting. His eyes were clouded with lust. "Don't apologize," He breathed out with a lazy smile.

I rolled my eyes, but couldn't help but smile. "I might if this is what happens." I smugly said, surprisingly myself at my words.

Alexander was too by his wide eyes, but it was quickly turned into teasing as his signature smirk returned. "Baby, you don't have say sorry for this to happen again." He said lowly with a wink.

I rolled my eyes at him, pushing at his chest slightly. "Oh shush," I was blushing now and he was loving it as he pinched one of my cheeks before I batted it away.

He stepped away and helped me hop down. "You know..." he started, making me look up at him. "you never went on that date with me." It's true, but only because I had to be up so early the next day. "Tonight?" He asked with a grin.

I tapped my chin in mock thought. "Hmm, well I'll have to check my schedule and—"

"Ana,"

I smiled. "Yes, Alex, we can go tonight."

~>~

I stepped down the stairs, dressed red, sleeveless , shift dress that stopped just below my knees. This was one I've owned for years now, but have only found two occasions to wear it. I knew the people in Alexander's world would never wear the same thing twice. The man had over twenty white dress shirts for God's sake.

Footsteps came from the kitchen. I walked over there and saw Alex standing there with his phone in hand.

"Ready?" I asked, now catching his attention.

He looked up and smiled, shoving his phone into his pocket. "I don't know if I should let you out with that dress on." I was surprised by his reaction because this dress wasn't revealing nor very tight.

I felt my cheeks heat at his words. "Okay well I'm hungry." I awkwardly said, turning my face from his heated gaze.

He chuckled softly before coming over to wrap an arm around my waist. "Shall we?"

~>~

We didn't get in the usual SUV. This time Alexander was driving and his car nearly left me speechless. I'd never seen a car this nice let alone driven in one. It was black, completely smooth— not a single smudge. The interior was a tan leather, only two seats.

"*This* is your car?" My mouth nearly hit the floor as I continued basically *drooling* over how beautiful it was.

He nodded with a smirk, lifting the keys to press a button. "Yup," the doors automatically lifted upwards instead of the *usual* door.

"Who are you? *Batman*?" I asked as I took a seat onto the smooth leather.

He gets into the next to me, the doors lowering around us until the click into place. "Hang on tight, baby." Before I was able to register his words, he zoomed out of the parking garage and onto the busy New York streets.

"Alexander, slow down!" I scolded, lightly hitting his arm. The wind blew around his, my hair was flying into my face.

The sound of the engine mixed with his laughter as he continued driving.

I was engaged to a mad man.

We soon pulled up to the restaurant. I silently thanked the Lord that we survived.

My door was opened for me by one of the valet workers. Alexander was soon by my side as he wrapped an arm around my waist. He handed his keys over to the man then lead me into the

restaurant.

"Reservations for Knight." Alexander's said to the hostess.

She quickly nodded and gathered a couple of menus. "Right this way," she said with a smile. We followed her to a table near the back with a view of the water. "Enjoy," she spoke after setting the menus down. I gave a small smile and Alexander nodded before she walked away.

I looked down at the menu and sighed a breath of relief when saw it was in English and had items that I actually recognized.

We ordered our food and drinks once the waitress came back. We stayed talking for nearly two hours, slowly finishing our food.

I learned more about Alexander like how in high school he was the pitcher through out his years in high school earning him a full ride to Princeton. It was difficult trying to imagine him as an adolescent *teenager*. He was always up to something he said. Alex told me the story of how him and his buddies drove an hour out past the city where the suburbs surrounded them. They drove down to a creek just to smoke some pot. He said it was his first and last time since they ended up getting busted for it. I laughed at that, thinking about him being high and suddenly the cops show up. I'd have a heart attack!

Alexander payed the bill and held a hand out for me as he stood. I took it and he began walking, leading me out towards the door.

"Alexander," we both turned to see Dimitri sitting at the table with two other men that looked scary as hell. They were all dressed in suits, but just looking at them you knew they weren't anyone you wanted to be mixed in with.

"Dimitri," Alexander greeted with the same coldness, giving a curt nod. His jaw was hard as he continued locking eyes with my step father.

"So this is Anastasia," one of the men at the table said, eyeing me up and down.

How did he know?

I shifted uncomfortably, not saying anything. Alexander released my hand for to wrap his arm around my waist to pull me in close.

The man gave me a toothy grin that made my skin crawl. "Aw she's a shy one."

"*Tony*." Dimitri barked at him. I was surprised he had made him stop. His eyes tore away from the man and back to Alexander. "Did you get my message?" He asked with a sinister smirk.

"*Loud* and *clear,*" Alexander said lowly through gritted teeth.

Dimitri nodded. "Good," he looked over to me for a moment. "Have a nice night."

"I wish I could tell you the same." Alex said lowly before pulling

me away. We exited the restaurant and the valet soon had the car up front. He handed them the keys and a tip. Alex opened the car door for me, still not saying anything.

Right when Alexander entered the car he started driving. A few minutes went by of just silence. His jaw was hard and he seemed to be in deep though by the his furrowed brows.

"Alexander," I said softly, breaking the silence. He didn't say anything, just continued looking forward at the road. It was so odd seeing him upset, I hated it. "*please* say something." Anything. I wanted him to say anything at this point. I reached for his hand that rested on the vent counsel.

He took his hand from under mine and placed it on the steering wheel. "This was a mistake."

My eyes went wide at his words. I felt as if someone put a knife through my heart. "What do you mean?" My biggest fears were coming true.

He shook his head. "*This,* all of this was a mistake."

My heart nearly dropped to my stomach. He didn't really mean that did he? He was putting color into my nightmares, but I guess I shouldn't be surprised. I knew something like this was going to happen if I started to actually like him. "Alex, what are you talking about?"

"You should return back home. I'll still pay for everything—"

"*No,*" I nearly snapped. "No, no, no. You have to talk to me about what is going on." I nearly pleaded.

If this were two months ago I'd be more than happy to go back home, but things were different. Since I learned about what Dimitri was holding over Alex I felt it was my responsibility to help him anyway that I could.

His mouth fell into a straight line, no emotion in his facial features.

This was because of Dimitri's message.

"Anastasia, there are things I can't protect you from. For your own good you *need* to go back to Arizona." His voice was stained as his grip on the steering wheel a little tighter.

I shook my head. "I don't care. What did *he* say to you?"

"It doesn't matter—"

"Cut the bullshit, Alex." I snapped.

Just at his convenience we pulled into the parking garage and he stopped in his usual spot. He put the car in park, but I quickly pushed down on the lock button to keep him from opening it right away. "Alex,"

"For once will you just listen to me?" He was now looking at me, but his eyes didn't hold anger like his voice tried to portray. No— it

was sadness.

I shook my head and adjusted to full turn towards him. "Please tell me." I once again begged.

His heavy sigh indicated that it was bad news and even more stress that he'd have to deal with. "Dimitri has a request, but it's something I can't give him." He stated vaguely.

I arched a brow. "What's the request?"

He looked away and stared at whatever was in front of him. "It's nothing you need to worry about"

I rolled my eyes. "Okay, Drama Queen, spit it out." I said using my new nickname for him I was quite fond of.

He gave me a *look* that made me smirk. "Ana,"

"Oh come on, just tell me. If I'm going home then it won't matter if you tell me, will it?" I persuaded.

He looked at me longingly before sighing. "Despite of what I tell you, you're going home." He said sternly.

I nodded, raising my pinky up to which he just raised an eyebrow. "What? Have you never *pinky sworn*?

He shook his head, still looking at my pinky as if it were the plague. "Can't say I have."

I shrugged and waved my pinky slightly to get this promise official. "Well, I pinky swear... as long as it *really* will put me in danger."

"Oh it will," He said now holding my pinky with his. A moment later he let his hand fall back to his side. "Dimitri wants us to be married by the end of the month."

My eyes went wide. That's *very* soon. Like... *two weeks.* "W-what?"

Alex nodded and sighed. "Married by the end of this month." He restated. "He wants my company, Ana. No— he *needs* my company. I had my sources do some much searching and he's losing money. I don't know how, but he is." Alex sighed. "He thinks by you marrying me he could easily take my business without leaving a trace of foul play."

Dimitri was as cold hearted as they came. I wanted to say I was shocked, but I wasn't. He didn't have any regard for anyone but himself. Not even his own son! I shook my head, not really knowing what to say. I needed to help Alexander, I knew that was certain. If I didn't what would happen to him?

"What will happen if we're not married?"

He gave a small smile as he reached for my hand, lifting it up to kiss the top. "Don't worry about that."

"You can't tell me not to worry, Alex. I care about you," I admitted, looking at him with worry.

His hand lifted to cup my cheek. I leaned into his touch, his warm

hand left sparks whoever his skin met mine. "Ana, I want you to be safe. I *need* you to be. You were thrown into this life not knowing what to expect and it's my fault. Please let me protect you." His words made me melt.

"It's not your fault though. It's my mother and Dimitri." I tried to reason with him.

"Whoever's fault it may be, I'm going to fix this. You're going home in the morning." He retracted his hand and unlocked his door, stepping out.

I shook my head and opened the door, slamming it shut. "So you're just going to give up like that?" I snapped as I stormed over to him. "*You* don't get to make decisions for me Alexander Knight." I poked at his chest, looking up towards him. Moments like these I wish I was taller.

"Anastasia you don't understand—"

"Oh *can* it. I understand well enough to know that if we are not married that you're going to lose everything. That is *not* happening because I won't let them win. We're getting married by the end of the month. We'll do it if I have to drag you there myself." I finished with a huff.

I couldn't tell what he was thinking in that moment. His eyes were searching for something as his lips remained shut in a firm line. A moment later he shook his head. "This isn't what you want."

I shrugged. "I don't want a lot of things, but sometimes you just have to suck it up and do what's right." The echo sounding from my voice reminded me we were in the middle of a parking garage. The concrete and few random cars seemed to be the only things surrounding us.

I couldn't keep his gaze any longer. I look to the ground, not knowing what to say any more. That seemed to be a pattern with me though. Not knowing and then spewing my thought in no particular way.

"Okay," I barely was able to hear him, his voice was just shy of a true whisper.

I looked up at him and his features had softened. "Okay? You'll let me help you?" I asked, taking a step towards him.

He nodded. "Yes, but please know this isn't what I wanted for you —"

"Oh shut up," I cut him off before pulling his lips down to mine. He responded immediately, arms wrapping around my waist.

Our moment only lasted a moment. A horn went off and lights were shining right on us. I squinted as I pulled away, looking at the car in front of us.

"Get out of the way!" The driver shouted.

Alexander rolled his eyes and flipped him off as he drove past us.

"What an asshole," I mumbled.

"We're always being interrupted," he groaned, leaning his forehead against me.

I laughed. "Well we are in the middle of a parking garage where people *park* their cars."

His hand held my chin, tipping it back so he could look at me. "I don't care where we are. I hate when anyone interrupts my time with you." He left a chaste kiss on my lips before grabbing my hand to pull me to the elevator.

Thank you guys for all the reads! I hope you liked this chapter. I really wanted to show off how strong of a character Anastasia can be. When I started this book I wanted it to be a mixture of everything I love about romance novels and even the genre chicklit. I hate when girls in stories just automatically fall for the guy and just listen to everything they say. As a writer, it's hard sometimes to not move things along quicker or be cliche. I'm trying to take my time developing the characters and their stories without dragging it on too much. I am always up for constructive criticism so please share your thoughts below! This is a first draft of the story and I plan on perfecting it one day.

IMPORTANT

Hey! So Wattpad is being really crazy right now with glitches and what not. I had just posted chapter 19 earlier today, but a lot of you aren't able to view it, including myself. When I go to the chapter it goes blank and brings me back to chapter one.

So with that being said, I'm taking the chapter down until the problem is solved. It won't even show the votes or comments.

I'm sorry for the inconvenience, guys! Hopefully it'll be fixed soon.

Chapter Twenty

Here's the playlist for Deal With the Devil. I hope you guys enjoy! And just a warning it's *very* random and mixed with so many genres of music lol.
Never Be Like You // **Fume**
What You Need // **The Weeknd**
I Feel It Coming // **The Weeknd (ft. Daft Punk)**
Don't Worry Baby // **The Beach Boys**
Where the Skies Are Blue // **The Lumineers**
Love Me Tender // **Elvis Presley**
Fade Into You // **Mazzy Star**

Tonight was the gala for the business expo Alexander was hosting. We arrived at the hotel not long ago and almost immediately started setting up in the large banquet room. It had three large chandeliers hanging from the ceiling that lit up the room with a warm glow. People were in and out of the doors setting up the tables and other equipment needed.

Alex had me check list everything that arrived to make sure we had all that we needed. He was directing people where to put things all while talking on the phone to various people.

That man needs a clone of himself.

Diana and Dimitri were sure to come tonight and I was dreading it. Alexander said we'd have to tell them about accepting Dimitri's request. I'm sure he won't be too thrilled since the idea was for Alex just to give up.

I gave a weird look to the men bringing in an ice sculpture of the logo for Knight Corporations. It was nearly August, how was that thing not melted the second they got it out of the car?

"That's a little much," I mumbled under my breath. I looked down at the clip board and checked another thing off the list.

"Anastasia!" I twirled around to see who was calling my name. A plump woman with too much blue eyeshadow was approaching me. I started to smell her overpowering perfume as soon as she stood a few feet away. "You are, Anastasia, right?" She made sure. She eyed me up and down, her face blank.

I nodded. "Yes, you are?" I asked.

"Maura Jameson, Mr. Knights event planner." She spoke proudly.

Congratulations? "Okay," I said with question in my voice.

Maura pursed her lips slightly and adjusted the emerald colored blazer that had jewels along the opening. "He didn't tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

"He said all decision should go through you." She informed me.

I arched a brow. "He did?" I looked around the room quickly to see if he was around. "I-I don't know anything about planning these type of things." I said honestly.

She chuckled. "That's why *I'm* here."

Maura and I set up and directed everyone as they came in, taking over what Alexander was doing. I was basically there just to confirm everything she was doing. Maura did a wonderful job of decorating, her work was amazing.

Soon after we finished Alexander came back into the room, his hair was wild. He approached me with a stressed look that took over his facial features. "Hey," He wrapped an arm around my waist, pulling me closer to put a kiss on the top of my head.

The unexpected gesture made my cheeks heat up slightly. Especially since he had done it in front of everyone. Maura gave me a knowing smile before looking over to Alex. "Everything's all finished, Mr. Knight."

He stuck a hand out that she shook as he offered a small smile. "Thanks, Maura. You did wonderful as usual."

"Thank you. Have fun tonight you too, but not *too* much fun." She smirked at her words that held a double meaning.

I was redder than a tomato as I looked at her with wide eyes as she walked away. I heard Alexander chuckled and I looked up to lightly push his chest. "Shut up," I grumbled before walking away.

"Not so fast," He said from behind me. Alex grabbed onto my hand, pulling my into his chest. He smiled down at me, tucking a hair behind my ear. "Where are you off to?"

"Well considering its," I grabbed his wrist that was on my hip and looked at the watch wrapped around it. "almost four, I was going to get ready." I dropped his arm and pried his other arm off me, much to his protest.

He slightly pouted as he nodded. "If you must,"

I rolled my eyes, but smiled. "See you soon, Mr. Knight."

A wide smile graced his face. "Can't wait, *Mrs. Knight."*

I didn't respond as I turned on my heel to walk out of the room.

Mrs. Knight

That name held so much meaning. Everyone knew and loved Alexander. Besides Dimitri, I hadn't met someone that didn't like Alex. At first I thought everything about him was fake and the *charming* persona was all an act, but it wasn't. Alex really was a kind and caring human being.

In two short weeks I'd be married to him. I couldn't help but be nervous. He gave me an out to all of this and maybe I should have taken it. I could have gone back to the life I had in Arizona waiting for me.

But I couldn't leave him here with no way out. *I* was his way out of all this mess. Dimitri had to be taken down. He couldn't treat people this way anymore. Even Collin was being affected and though I don't really know him, he was also family. Diana might have burned a bridge with me, but my brother was just a child and couldn't defend himself against any of this.

The elevator doors opened to the floor we were staying on. Alexander said it'd be best if we stayed here tonight to avoid any run ins with the paparazzi. After the last time when Alex *punched* that guy the other reporters ate it up. But luckily it was quickly forgotten when one of the Kardashian's dyed their hair blonde.

I slid the card key in its slot and the green light flashed signally that it had unlocked. I opened the door and was now standing in the largest hotel room I'd ever been in. It was more of a suite than anything. I walked in and to the right was a small kitchen area with a tall table and stools. The living room was in the center and large windows ahead of that showing off the city. The sun was setting so the Orange and pink hues lit up the room.

I went into the room I'd be staying in. It was nearly as big as the room I was in at Alexander's home. There laying on top of the champagne colored bedspread was the baby blue colored gown I had picked out, or more like Alex *forced* me to pick out.

I lifted the dress and examined it. The satin material was soft, but the dress was heavier. It seemed to flare out a little more than I expected, but not in a bad way. Alexander said everyone went all out for this event so there was no way of being *over* dressed.

Soon a hair and makeup stylist came in and turned me into someone else pretty much. They did a great job as usual and left my hair down like I liked. It was in bigger curls than framed my face. I didn't like my hair up because I had a scar on the back of my neck from falling out of a tree house when I was ten. It was hardly visible now, but I still hated it.

I stepped into the Spanx shape wear that was necessary for a dress like this. I knew I ate too many donuts this morning not to wear it. Finally I put on the dress and successfully zipped it up. It was form fitting until about the waist and then it flowed out around me. I felt like Cinderella in this dress.

The dress was long enough so you couldn't see my shoes. I shamelessly put on my nude flats, not bothering with heels. I wasn't going to be uncomfortable in heels all night if no one was going to

even look at them.

A knock came from the door and I turned at the same time it was being opened. Alexander stood there frozen, looking at me.

I had a small smile at his reaction. "Are you just going to stand there gawking?" I joked.

He nodded, eyeing me from head to toe. "Yup," was his response, popping the 'p'.

I rolled my eyes, but smiled, shaking my head at him. "*You* need to get ready," I said with my hands on my hips. He was wearing a plain white T-shirt and dark wash jeans. He looked so *hot* in casual clothes, but it was still so odd seeing him in anything than a suit. I walked over to him and ran ruffled his hair. "You also need a hair cut."

He chuckled and held my hips, bring me closer to him. "You look beautiful," He compliment, smiling down at me.

"Oh, thanks." I was so awkward when it came to accepting compliments. I hated any sort of attention.

He smirked, knowing how his words affected me. "I'll go get ready." He swiftly leaned down and pecked my lips and then walking away into the bathroom that was attached to the room.

I wonder why he didn't use his own.

I walked out of the room and into the kitchen, opening the fridge. There were a couple bottles of water and not much else, but when I opened the drawer at the bottom my eyes went wide.

Chocolate. So much chocolate.

I don't know why or how they ended up in the fridge, but I wasn't mad. There's nothing better than a cold piece of chocolate. I lifted the small box and took off the lid to reveal the assorted flavors of the heavenly flavor. I picked up and piece and hummed in satisfaction as my taste buds exploded.

My period is definitely coming soon.

There was a knock coming from the front door. I quickly shoved the candy back in the fridge before swallowing my bite. I opened the door and a man much taller than me was standing there. He had dark hard that was wavy and his facial features were strong and defined. He had an odd resemblance to Alexander.

"Hi?" I answered, confused at why this man was here.

"You must be Anastasia!" Suddenly I was engulfed my strong arms, pinning my own arms to my sides.

"What the hell?" I shrieked as I tried to break free from his hold. I was have *serious* deja vu.

He pulled away, grinning. "I'm Marcus,"

I arched a brow. "Okay?" *Why does everyone assume I know them?*

He chuckled. "Alexander never mentioned me?"

Would I be so confused if he did?

"You are?" I pushed.

"I'm Marcus, his brother." *Oh.*

"I'll be right back," I smiled sweetly before shutting the door on Marcus and turning to walk as quickly as I could in the big ass dress it *swooshed* as I walked into the bedroom and knocked on the door aggressively. "Alexander Knight, open this door!"

Please be wearing clothes, please be wearing a clothes.

The water cut and I heard the curtain open. "What is it?" He asked with concern. A moment later the door was swung open. Alex has a towel tied around his waist as he stood there in his shirtless glory.

Sweet mother of God

He stepped in front of me and looked to be examining me to see if anything was wrong. "What is it? What's wrong?"He asked with furrowed eyebrows.

"Uh, what, um," Him being shirtless was not helping anything right now. "Oh, yeah, a guy named Marcus is here? He said he's your brother." I explained.

He groaned as his head leaned back. "Fuck," he mumbled before carefully stepping around my dress.

I followed him out to the living area where he went to the front door and swung it open. "*What* are you doing here?" He snapped at his brother who just had a wide smile. I looked between the two brothers. The similarity in their features was uncanny. There was no denying they were related.

Marcus chuckled. "Dad invited me, told me I should meet your *fiancé."* He said with a smirk. "I can't believe you didn't tell me, Alexander!" He ducked underneath Alex's arm was was leaning against the doorframe. Alex rolled his eyes from behind his brother and shut the door.

"I didn't tell you because you can't keep a secret, Marcus." Alex said flatly, his arms crossed as he glared at his little brother. Alex really never talked about him much. He only gave vague details as to how old he is.

Marcus scoffed, his mouth slightly gaped. "Your engagement is *hardly* a secret." He pointed to the TV that was on and it just so happened to be a news channel talking about Alex and I.

They always chose the worst photos of me to put on national television.

"The less you know the better." He said to Marcus. Alex did mention that his brother had a big mouth and if he was drunk or mad enough, he'd let things slip out.

Marcus just shrugged. "I let out *one* family secret. Big deal."

"It was a big deal!" Alex snapped.

He just rolled his eyes. "Okay whatever. Can you go get clothes on? You're making this weird."

I covered my mouth to stifle a laugh as I looked between them. "Okay, lets just end this now. Marcus we'll see you tonight." I stepped over to the door, opening it. By the look on Alexander's face I could tell he had enough of his little brother.

Marcus nodded. "Alexander is always the hot head in our family. Very nice meeting you, Anastasia. See you two soon." With that I shut the door and slowly turned back to see Alex raking a hand through his wet hair.

"He is such a child." Alexander grumbled.

I arched a brow with a small smile. "You have no patience."

"I shouldn't *need* patience for a 24 year old man."

I shrugged. "Don't let him bother you. Go finished getting ready so we can go downstairs." I nudged my hip with his and he looked at me with a smirk.

"Ready to talk to Dimitri?"

"*No*, but I'm ready to eat." I said with a smile. That chocolate was not enough to hold me over. If anything it just made me crave actual food.

He chuckled and nodded. "Alright,"

Chapter Twenty One

Hey guys! Above is how I picture Marcus. If you envision something different that's totally cool, but yeah there ya go lol

Nearly an *hour* later Alexander was ready. I'd never seen a man spend so much time on his hair before! He kept ruffling it up and then combing it back, then combing it to the side and then to the back again. It was maddening I had to be the one to take the comb away from him.

We were now in the banquet room with nearly two hundred other people. I was amazed at how many people this room held.

Alex swiftly grabbed two champagne flutes as the waiter whisped by. "Thank you," I said as I took the glass from him.

"Alexander," We both turned around to see an older looking couple standing there. I looked a little longer at the woman since she looked familiar. I've see her face somewhere.

"Calvin, how are you?" Alex asked with a grin, sticking his hand out.

Calvin nodded and shook his head. "Very well," he looked over to the woman beside him. "You remember my wife, Laura, right?"

Alexander had that look for a split second that he in fact did *not* remember her. But he nodded anyway. "Of course, so glad you could come." Alex wrapped his arm around my waist, pulling me closer to his side. "This is, Anastasia, my fiancé." It's still *so* weird hearing him call me that.

"You got your hands full with this one." Calvin joked with a chuckle.

You have no idea.

They walked away a few minutes later and I was still standing there trying to figure out how I knew her. "What is their last name?" I asked Alex.

"Spencer," He answered. "Why?"

"She looks so familiar,"

He nodded. "She's a guest judge on Dancing With the Stars occasionally." *Of course she is.*

"That must be it," I said, but it wasn't. It had to be from somewhere else.

I let the thought disappear as Alexander lead me to different people. We continued having the same conversation with pretty

much everyone.

Alex was about to start walking over to another couple, but Marcus approached us before we were able to.

Alex's face fell as he narrowed his eyes at his brother. "Move, Marcus."

"I think your fiancé is dying from boredom." Marcus stated, looking between me and him.

Was it that obvious?

"Go away," Alex grunted.

I bit my lip to stop myself from smiling. Watching the two of them together was pure entertainment. "Alex, how about I go grab us a couple drinks? I'll be right back." I offered, very desperately trying to avoid another conversation about stocks and bonds.

"I'll come with," Marcus rushed to say.

Alex let out a small grunt before nodding. "*Fine,"*

I smile sweetly before reaching to peck his cheek.

"Gross," Marcus muttered. I rolled my eyes before walking away.

Marcus quickly caught up to me and walked alongside as we approached the bar.

"Amarillo Sour And scotch on the rocks." I told the bartender. He nodded and began making the drinks. "Did you want something?" I turned to ask Marcus.

He shook his head. "I'm gave up alcohol,"

I arched a brow. "Really?" I was surprised only because I heard he had such a reputation for partying.

He nodded. "I *love* liquor, but that's part of my problem." He said with a chuckle, trying to ease the seriousness.

"Well good for you in recognizing that it was a problem." I praised, truly impressed. I had an uncle who was an alcoholic. So much so that he drank himself to death when I was ten.

"Here you are, ma'am." The bartender scooted two glasses across the wooden bar. I thanked him and turned back to Marcus.

"So how did someone as beautiful as you end up with my brother?" Marcus asked with a smirk. The same smirk I'd seen a hundred times on Alex.

That's one thing they have in common.

I rolled my eyes, unphased by his compliment. "It's a long story, but we met through my mother and the rest was history." I waved my hand dismissively as I explained. Okay so what I wasn't saying wasn't *technically* lying.

He nodded, looking convinced enough. "You still want to marry him even though his face looks like... *Well* his face."

I laughed and nodded. "We're kind of like Beauty and the Beast." I joked, knowing full well that Alex was far from looking like the

beast. He looked more like how the beast was when the curse was broken.

Marcus smiled. "Well just so you know, you're already a thousand times more tolerable than the girl he was with before."

"Good to know," I said sarcastically. I didn't like hearing about any of the woman Alex had been with. I wouldn't admit it, but it made me jealous. Thinking of anyone else being with Alex just down right hurt.

I reached for the two drinks on the bar. "I've got to go find, Alexander."

He nodded. "Okay, I'll see you back at the table." He winked before walking away.

I resisted an eye roll and walked around to find Alex. It was basically a sea of people and I was Dory at this point asking if anyone had seen my fiancé.

A shoulder roughly brushed against mine, the liquid in the glasses teetering slightly from the rough movement. I turned to apologize, but stopped once I saw it was Dimitri. He was glaring down at me as if it were *my* fault that *he* bumped into *me*. "Excuse you," I mumbled under my breath. I tried to sidestep to get around him, but he continued blocking my way. "Can I help you?" I snapped.

"When will you be returning home?" He asked, a glint of satisfaction behind his eyes.

I smiled sweetly, knowing it'd get under my skin. "After the party," I said.

He was now smirking. "Alexander was pathetic to think I would wait *three* months for you two to get married. It's time for you to go back to wherever the hell you're from anyway. You *don't* belong here." His words were mean to get to me, but they didn't. I didn't take anything this man said to heart.

I continued smiling. "Arizona? Oh I'm not going back there. Alex and I have *wonderful* news to share with you a little later."

His smile fell and eyes darkened. "Don't test me, *little girl."*

"I don't think I know what you're talking about." I said innocently.

Dimitri narrowed his eyes at me, glaring daggers. He was about to say something, but Alexander's voice stopped him. We both turned to see him standing on the platform, waiting for everyone's attention. "I want to thank you all for coming tonight." He began.

I looked over to Dimitri, but he was gone. I searched around the room slightly to see where he'd gone. I only saw Diana sitting at the table with Collin, my little brother that I'd yet to see during my time here.

Alex finished talking and walked off the stage. I quickly moved my way through people to get to him before he walked away. He

noticed me almost instantly as he reached the last step off the platform. "There you are," He almost sounded relieved. His arm wrapped around my waist, bringing me closer. "I hope Marcus wasn't *too* annoying."

I had a small smile on my face as I shook my head. "He wasn't, but I talked to Dimitri." I said.

Alex's face fell and turned serious. "What did he say?"

I pursued my lips slightly. "Well let's just say he kind of knows we're getting married."

He nodded and without a word lead us back to our table. Luckily we were seated with his family. His mother and father stood to give me a hug.

"So nice to see you again, Anastasia." His mother said in her French accent. Amelia looked beautiful. Her hair was in an updo and makeup was flawless. For her age she didn't have nearly as many wrinkles as the average, but she didn't look like she had Botox. Her sapphire blue dress complimented her skin tone and hair. One could only wish to look as good as she does when you've had two kids who are both full grown.

"You too, and also you," I smiled, hugging Phillip, his father.

"Long time no see," Marcus joked as Alex and I took our seats. I sat in between the two brothers and knew that this seating arrangement would cause some bickering between them.

"Why are you here exactly?" Alex asked, looking at his brother with a tilt to his head.

Marcus shrugged. "Visiting,"

"Leave your brother alone." Amelia scolded Alex. "Those two are always arguing about something." She said to me with a frown.

I gave a small smile in response. She obviously didn't like them fighting. That was clear as day.

"I was not arguing, mom." Marcus said like a child that was in trouble. "He starts it."

She rolled her eyes and said something in French I couldn't understand. But it was enough for Alexander and Marcus to both look at her apologetically.

"I'm sorry, no more arguments." Alex promised as he looked over to her.

She smiled and nodded. "Good,"

"Kiss ass," Marcus mumbled under his breath.

Alex turned to glare at him, but didn't say anything.

"Enough," I hissed at the both of them. This was going to be a long night...

~>~

After eating, Alex pulled me away from the table and out of the

banquet room. His hand was holding mine as he lead us out to the pool area that had a a secluded patio. It was decorated with strings of lights hung around the tall plants that surrounded us. The furniture looked more expensive than anything I owned back at him. Even the ground was beautiful. It was

I arched an eyebrow at him. "Is everything alright?" I asked him as he let go off my hand. He didn't answer with words. Instead he held my face in his hands and brought his lips to mine. When he pulled away he just looked at me for a moment. "Is that a yes?" I asked.

He chuckled and nodded. "I just needed a moment away from all of them."

I nodded, understanding his need to get away. "If you need your space I can go—"

"I want you here with me, Ana." He cut me off, reassuring me. "I don't think I'll ever not want you around me. I'm not sure how you do it, but you calm me down and make it seem like everything is going to be alright." He admitted.

I felt like my heart was swelling from his worlds. I met his gaze, not knowing exactly how to respond. "Everything *is* going to be alright." I assured. I knew there was the chance of Dimitri getting what he wanted, but I'd do everything in my power for that not to happen.

Alex reached my for my hand and pulled me into him, wrapping his arms around me. "I love having you close to me." He said softly, the top of his head reacting on top of mine.

I hummed my response, also loving the feel of being in his arms. "We should go back." I said a few minutes later, knowing people would start to notice if he was gone too long.

He sighed, but nodded. "Alright," I held my hand out for him and he firmly took it, lifting it to leave a kiss on top.

We walked out of the pool area and down the hall. When we approached the doors to the banquet room we both stopped. Dimitri was standing outside, looking down at his phone with a deep frown.

Alexander glanced down at me before picking his pace back up. I thought he'd go straight into the room, but he instead walked up to the devil himself. Dimitri looked up from his phone and his cold eyes narrowed at the both of us.

"Dimitri—"

"Save your breath, Alexander. You're going to need it when I'm done with you." Dimitri growled out. "You may have managed to convince *her* to marry you, but your company is still mine."

"He didn't convince me to do anything, Dimitri." I snapped, causing his glare to move away from Alex. "What you're doing is

wrong." I stated, knowing my words meant nothing to him.

Dimitri scoffed, proving me right. "You're a fool, marrying him. You'll go down with the rest of them." He said with a sinister smirk.

Alex took a threatening step forward, but my hand went to his chest to stop him from moving anymore. He looked like he wanted to kill Dimitri. I'd never seen him so angry. "He's not worth it." I whispered to him.

Alex glanced down at me with and then back at Dimitri. "Get out," He nearly growled.

Dimitri kept his smirk as he looked between us. "You deserve each other. Two idiots, it's comical really." He chuckled and turned on his heel to go back in the room, completely ignoring Alexander's command.

"I can't wait til that son of a bitch is six foot under." Alex said, raking a hand through his hair.

I didn't have any positive words to give him. All I could do was stand by his side and hope we could really get out of this mess.

Chapter Twenty Two

Thank you guys for all the support you've given this story. It really does mean a lot and I've enjoyed writing it for you all! If you guys leave comments I try to reply as soon as I can. Thanks again!!

I was sitting down on one of the couches in the living room with my laptop sitting on my thighs. I continued typing out some papers I needed for work this week. I had brought it home because *someone* was way too distracting and keeping me from actually doing work.

Speak of the devil, Alex appeared from the hallway and came straight over to me, plopping down onto the couch. "What are you doing?" He asked, not bothering to look at the screen. Instead he looked over my face, spending a little extra times gazing at my lips and eyes. His arm stretched back and I felt his hand pick up a piece of my hair and he began twirling it around his fingers gently.

"Work," I said, looking back at the screen. Suddenly the laptop was shut closed and I turned to look at him furrowed brows. "Hey —"

"You don't need to bring work home, Ana." He said with a frown. His hair made me want to smile. It started to wave slightly as the length had grown out so much. I liked it this way. It made him look so carefree and youthful.

I rolled my eyes and tried to lift it back up, but his hand remained on top. "It's really not a big deal." I told him. I really didn't mind working. It was something that gave me a purpose and a way to busy myself. I couldn't imagine just staying at home all day long. That sounded awful.

He nodded, slightly leaning in closer. "It is when it distracts you."

I arched a brow. "Distract me? From what?"

He smirked. "Me," his leaned in and barely was able to kiss me before I moved away.

"Nope, you're not distracting *me."* I swiftly stood up, taking my laptop with me and walking over to the kitchen. I placed my laptop down on the island and sat up on the barstool next to the counter.

I heard him trudge all the way in here and I already knew he was sulking. "You're no fun," he muttered, making me laugh.

"Oh stop pouting. Don't *you* have work to do?" I was surprised to see him out of his office. Usually when we got back home he would

go in there for a couple hours before coming out.

He placed his hands on the counter and leaned forward, shaking his head. "I'm all yours, baby." He said with a grin.

I chuckled, shaking my head. I looked down at my laptop to hide the blush on my cheeks from his nickname he called me. "Well I do, get out of here." I bit my bottom lip to keep from smiling.

Alex groaned. "*Fine*," he walked over, bending down to kiss my cheek. "I'll be back in a little bit." I nodded, continuing to look down at the words I was typing.

Around forty five minutes later I decided to call Nora. I hadn't really talked to her that much since we came back from seeing them. I was starting to miss her, especially with the wedding coming up so soon. I hadn't even had a chance to tell her about that yet either. I was nervous about what she'd say, but I'd have to tell her sooner or later.

I dialed her number and lifted the phone to my ear, the dial ringing in the background.

"Hello?" Nora answered.

"Hey," I said kind of awkwardly.

"Hi, sweetheart, what are you up to?" She asked. I could hear some clattering in the back and assumed she was doing the dishes.

I smiled at the thought. I even miss random and unimportant moments like walking into the kitchen and just seeing her do dishes while the phone was tucked between her ear and shoulder. Usually she was always talking to her own mom or sister. I swear they never went a day without calling each other at least once.

"Not a whole lot. But I kind of have something to tell you." *Kind of?* I sound like I was in high school again telling her about the latest teenage drama.

"What?"

I took a deep breath, holding it in for a second before letting it out softly. "Well... Dimitri, Diana's husband, has been making some threats—"

"*Threats*?!" Nora panicked. I assumed she would and that's why I'd been avoiding tell her after all this time.

"Nora, listen, it's fine, we're fine." I said softly, somewhat amused to be honest. She apologized and told me to carry on. "Well Dimitri proposed something and I had no choice but to oblige." I continued telling her everything about Dimitri and what would happen if we hadn't accepted his offer.

Nora let out a deep sigh. "That's horrible," She said in a way that sounded like it was meant to herself.

"I know," sometimes I couldn't even believe it and I was living it.

"I-I don't think we'll be able to make it to the wedding with

everything that's happening over here." She said, her voice cracking slightly.

"Don't worry, I know. Trust me I'd be at home with you guys in an instant if I could. Maybe with getting married sooner I'll be home *sooner."* I said, but I felt a tinge of sadness saying that. I missed my family and sometimes even the whole state of Arizona, but I wouldn't see Alex anymore.

"You're right, Annie." She said and I heard her sniffle. "Well I was actually going to call you today too because I have some good news."

"What?" I asked.

"Your father restarted the treatment today. They finally got rid of the pneumonia."

"Really?" I asked excitedly. "That's amazing! Oh my gosh," I couldn't stop the smile on my face. That was the best news I'd heard in a while.

We continued talking and she told me all about his care plan. They'd start the treatment on Sunday after all his fluids were clean from any of the germs the pneumonia might have left. I didn't understand some one what the fluids were because I pretty much have no idea about anything medical.

During our phone call we also agreed not to tell Julia about the wedding happening so soon. Not because we wanted to keep it a secret from her, but because of how she'll act. I knew she'd want to be here, but it just wouldn't be a good idea with everything going on.

~>~

The next week went by incredibly fast. A little too fast. I was nervous to get married and didn't know why. I guess I was because it was obviously something I'd never done before. It was the fear of the unknown. Would being married even help the situation? What would happen when all of this was over? Just so many scenarios and questions going around my head, paralyzing me with anxiety.

I was sitting at home alone— well kind of. Ronan was downstairs waiting for me. Alex had gone to work and insisted I stayed home to relax. He could tell I was getting nervous and stressed from everything goin on. I tried to convince him to let me leave, but it was no use. So Scott and Ronan came over to keep watch and basically be my babysitter. Scott had run out to get us lunch while Ronan and I remained at the apartment.

When I walked down the stairs from my room, I saw Ronan just standing there by the elevator looking like a statue.

"Don't you get bored?" I asked, approaching him.

He arched an eyebrow and let a silent chuckle lift his chest.

"Never a dull moment." He said with a serious tone, but looked over at me with a smirk a moment later.

I laughed. "*Clearly*, you look exhausted from all the craziness and *danger* happening right now in this room."

"Oh yeah, I know. I don't even know if I can handle all of this by myself." He played along, gesturing around the quiet room.

"So do you work seven days a week or what? I feel like I never see you have a day off." I said.

"I get Sunday's and Tuesday's off... most of the time." He answered.

"But don't you work over 40 hours a week? Even with the two days off?" I bombarded him with questions. I was genuinely curious. Him, Scott, or George— they were *constantly* around. If not in Alex's home, then downstairs waiting for him to call.

Ronan nodded. "Yes, but we get time and half so I'm okay with it." He assured. I mean I guess if I got paid time and a half I really wouldn't mind either. "Mr. Knight cares about his safety, but *especially* yours."

A small smile crept on my face at his words. I suddenly missed Alex and his annoying self. He had been working so much this past week with less than seven days until we would be married.

The elevator doors opened and in walked Scott with a scowl on his face and two bags of Chinese food. "That damn lady would not give me the freakin' egg rolls." He spat, making me laugh.

"Why?" I asked, amused. I walked over to him and took the bags out of his hands.

"She said, *we don't sell egg rolls to orders less than $20,* so I was like, *yeah okay, my order is $56, give me the freakin' rolls."* He huffed, shaking his head. I laughed a little harder at his impression of the Chinese woman.

"So... no egg rolls?" Ronan asked.

Scott narrowed his eyes at his coworker. "Did you not hear my story, *moron*? No egg rolls!"

"It's fine, Scott. Thank you for going," I smiled still, still entertained from his story.

"Last time I go to Chinatown, lemme tell you." He muttered behind me as we walked into the kitchen.

I set the bags on top of the counter and began pulling out each white carton. "Sweet and sour chicken?" I asked.

He nodded and tapped on the second bag. "Got that,"

Ronan chuckled and patted Scott's shoulder. "Hey, not for nothin'. At least we got fried rice."

Scott his hand palm to his forehead. "I forgot the damn rice!"

And this was how I was spending my day off...

A few hours later the elevator doors opened and in walked Alex looked very tired. Ronan, Scott, and I were sat in the living room watching the ID channel.

As soon as Ronan noticed Alex was here here basically jumped off the couch. "Thank God, I can't watch anymore of Joe Kenda." He said dramatically before walking to the elevator. Scott got up and gave a curt nod to Alex before leaving with his coworker.

"How was work?" I called back, but still looked at the TV. I'm sorry I just could not look away now. I'm about to find out who the murder was. He walked over and sat next to me. His arm wrapped around my shoulders as he pulled my closer to him. I adjusted my position as I leaned against his chest. "That bad?" I spoke since he stayed silent to my question.

He groaned. "Just another day," I looked up at him and he looked down, his other hand reaching over to tuck a strand of hair behind my ear. "But I'm glad I can come home to you."

His words made my heart hammer in my chest and I couldn't help the goofy smile that took over my face. "So cheesy," I teased.

He rolled his eyes, but chuckled. "You make me this way, woman."

I laughed and reached up to peck his cheek. "Don't worry, I don't mind."

Alex wasn't satisfied by the small kiss. He leaned back down to place his lips on mine. "I missed you at the office." He mumbled against my lips.

I pulled away and smirked. "Told you to let me come with."

He shook his head and caressed my cheek. "You work too much," *that couldn't be farther from the truth.*

"You're delusional if you think that's face."

He laughed. "Is it a crime I don't want you working? What's the point? I can provide for you, baby."

I leaned in to kiss him, quickly pulling away before he had to the chance to deepen it. "You're sweet, but I'm coming back to work."

He sighed and nodded, giving in. "Okay, but if you get stressed—"

"Alex,"

"What?"

"Shut up,"

He didn't say anything more about it and the rest of the night we just hung out on the couch watching TV. It felt normal in the oddest way.

What do you guys think? Leave your comments below!

Also here's a picture of Will Ferrel that I found and I really relate because this is gonna be me in the spring.

ANOTHER NOTE— have you guys been getting a ton of

snow??? I live near Chicago so it's been freezing here, but today's not too bad. Idk ok that was random sorry lol

Chapter Twenty Three

So I've been really frustrated with the Hot List in the Romance genre of Wattpad. I'm not saying I'm some great writer, but I feel like what's on the list currently, some, if not most, of the stories are so poorly written and make 0 sense. I'm not going to name which ones out of respect for the author's, but it blows my mind that people are reading such poorly written stories. Maybe I'm just over critical, but those are my thoughts. Sorry for the rant— I just had to for a moment haha

Just *two days* until Alexander and I would be officially married. The papers were already signed and ready to go. We were having a private ceremony on the NYC Town Hall. Dimitri insisted he had to be there to witness everything. We were in no position to decline any of his requests at this point. A small get together was quickly arranged by Amelia. She insisted and is also someone you couldn't deny.

Marrying Alex wasn't the part I was nervous about. It was dealing with what Dimitri had in store for us. After talking to him that night nearly two weeks ago at the hotel, we hadn't heard from him since. Alex told me not to worry, but I could see on his face that Dimitri's silence wasn't a good sign.

I was at the a wedding dress store with Ronan and Scott trying to pick something out to wear.

Yeah I know, not the most ideal company to pick out a wedding dress.

My phone started buzzing and I saw Julia's name flash across the screen. Mentally I was freaking out. I hadn't told her or Nora about getting married so soon. It wasn't that I didn't want them to know, but— okay yeah it was because I didn't want them to know. They always seemed to have an opinion and it's like if I didn't agree with them *I* was the crazy one. Getting married so soon is a little wild, but under these circumstances it was totally necessary.

I hesitated before answering, attempting to scramble some words to tell her. "Hey, Jules." I answered too quickly.

"Hey, what are you up to?"

*Oh not much, just dress shopping for my wedding on Friday. You? "*Grocery shopping," I lied, continuing to look at each dress. I lifted one off the hanger that was adorable. I turned it around to show the boys. They were sitting on the chairs put in the corner, looking

bored to death. They looked at me, both shaking their head *no.* I silently groaned and put it back on the rack. "How about you?"

"Just got back from seeing dad." She answered.

"How's he doing?"

"He's alright I guess. The pneumonia is gone so they can start treatment." She told me. I felt bad for pretending I hadn't already talked to Nora about everything. Her voice was strained with stress. The guilt of not being with them crept back.

I let out a heavy sigh. "Well that's really good news. When can he start?" I asked, already knowing.

"Sunday," was her curt answer.

"Why are they waiting til then?"

She further explained what Nora had said to me on the phone the other day. "They're trying, Ana. The nurse told me that he's almost clear of it."

"Well that's good,"

"Not really," She snapped, now sounding angry.

I was taken back by her tone. "I'm just trying to stay positive—"

"Yeah it's really easy to stay positive when you're two thousand miles away." Julia had never talked to me like this before. I know she was under a lot of stress, but I was helping the best I could.

"Julia, I'm sorry I can't be here, but I'm the one who got dad treatment." I said.

"Yeah, you're really doing a lot for him. Partying and living amongst the rich and famous. Poor Anastasia," her words were sharp as daggers. I felt each one stab through my heart.

"Julia—"

"Save it," with that she hung up, leaving me stunned.

Did that actually just happen?

I shake my head, still taken back. I walk over to Ronan and Scott to let them know I'm ready to leave. We almost immediately head to the car, Ronan holding the door open for me. I bid a quick 'thank you' before stepping in.

"Is everything alright?" Ronan glances back at me. We'd been driving for a few minutes before he noticed my unusual silence. Typically we'd all banter back and forth, but I was in no mood for that.

I shrugged. "I don't know." I muttered under my breath. He turned back to face the front, getting the hint I didn't really want to talk.

Once we arrived at the apartment, the door was swung open by Ronan and he helped me out of the car before walking closely beside me as we traveled through the paparazzi.

The elevator ride was silent as well. I didn't mean to make

anyone feel uncomfortable. I just knew if I started talking about what happened with Julia I'd most likely burst into tears.

As soon as I stepped out of the elevator Alexander was standing there with an unhappy expression. "Anastasia," He greeted lowly.

"Yes?" I asked, not in the mood for his moodiness.

"Where were you?" His eyes snapped from me to Ronan. I didn't realize how close I was to him until I glanced over my shoulder. We were inches apart and I knew that's what got Alex in this mood. Regardless, I wasn't up to dealing with it.

As if the day couldn't get much worse...

"I had to go to the store." I explained in a dull tone.

"You had to bring *him*?" He spat. "You're dismissed," he barked.

"Alexander, stop. I don't know what you're trying to do, but you're pissing me off." I snapped at him, looking over to Ronan who gave me a *look* of uncertainty. I nodded to him, letting him know it was fine if he left.

Ronan and Scott both left. The elevator door's closed and Alex stepped towards me. "You can't just go out shopping without—"

"Without you?" I finished for him. "Sorry, maybe I should wear a shock collar just incase?" I sarcastically suggested.

He pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes, releasing a deep sigh. "Don't patronize me, Ana."

I rolled my eyes. "Maybe you need to be alone." I turned on my heel to walk towards the door.

His heavy foot steps were coming up from behind me and reached over my should to keep the door shut.

I turned around, trying to act unphased by our closeness. He was a breath away at this point. Alex looked down at me with frustration in his eyes. "You're not leaving,"

"I'll do whatever the hell I want, Alexander." I tried pushing at his chest, but he wouldn't budge. "*Move,*" I demanded.

"Where would you even go?" He questioned with a huff.

"I don't know, *maybe* I'll call Ronan." I said to get under his skin.

And boy did it.

"He's fired," he pushed himself off of the door frame to pull out his phone.

I quickly snatched it from his hands and tucked it behind my back. "You're being irrational, Alex."

"I'm not the one making empty threats." He glared at me.

I lifted my hands just to drop them. I was beyond frustrated with myself and everything else that seemed to be going wrong today. "I-I need space." I set his phone on the small table against the wall and quickly went in the elevator, shutting the doors before he had a chance to come in.

Once it stopped on the main level, I exited the building through the back entrance to avoid any run-ins with the press. It was a colder summer day today. It had been sprinkling rain pretty consistently. It probably made my hair look like a lion's mane, but I didn't care. I continued walking down the busy streets of New York City.

Walking always helped me calm down. I did this back in Arizona also, but I'd always have to wait until night since it'd be too hot during the day. The rain today actually was more bearable than the typical humidity New York summer's brought.

Once the rain let up a bit, I found a spot at a random park and sat, I don't know how long. I didn't have my phone or anything with me. I watched different types of people pass by. Some with children, some with animals, some alone, some even on dates. I must've looked beyond creepy, but I really couldn't help it. On the outside most of the people looked happy, or at least content. It had me wondering how many people put on a fake smile just to make it through. That had become my life, faking it.

It reminded me of the fact that I'd be getting married in *two days* and I *in fact* had cold feet. As a little girl I dreamed of my wedding day, like most did. I wanted to fall in love with my soul mate and live happily ever after. Marriage to me now wasn't that at all. I cared for Alex, sure. And sometimes the feelings I felt for him scared me a bit. After we took Dimitri down, that'd be it. He wouldn't need me anymore and it'd just be another day done for him. I'd go home a divorced woman with only memories of the life I lived here in New York. At least it'd be one hell of a story to tell.

The sun was setting and the rain began to fall a little harder once again. I got off my bench and began my walk home. I didn't realize how far I was until I was heading back. It amazed me that even when it was getting late, the streets were still filled with the same amount of people and the lights from the streets made it nearly just as bright as the sun.

I arrived back at the building, letting a breath of relief past my lips. There were no camera men outside so I was able to slip inside with no problem.

Good to know the paparazzi don't come out in the rain.

I took the elevator up and several eyes met me as the doors opened up. "Uh, hey." I said awkwardly, stepping into the living room.

"Mr. Knight, she's here." George, Alex's private guard called out.

Seconds later Alex appeared from the hallway, stopping dead in his tracks when he saw me. I expected him to be angry, but got the opposite. His face softened and he quickly walked over to me,

wrapping his arms tightly around me. "Thank God, you're alright." He breathed out. "Where the hell were you?" He pulled back to ask. His eyes were examining my face.

"Why are they all here?" I asked, looking past him. Ronan, George, Scott, and a couple others were all standing.

He turned back to them, nodding his head. One by one they all walked into the elevator. Alex turned back to me, his hands running lightly up and down my arms. "You didn't have your phone. You were gone for hours." His voice was full of worry.

I sighed, not realizing I had put him through so much stress. "I'm sorry, I just needed to clear my head."

"I understand that, but there are people who could hurt you. I don't know what I'd do if..." his voice trailed off and jaw tensed at his own words.

I took his hand off my arm to hold it in my own. "Hey, I'm here and I'm okay."

He let go of my hand to wrap his arms around my waist. "When I couldn't find you I could only imagine the worst." He admitted.

I hugged him to me even more, trying to put his thoughts at ease. "Believe it or not, but I'm actually pretty capable of going on a walk without dying." I joked, pulling away slightly to look at him with a smile.

He looked down at me and swiftly tucked a hair behind my ear. "Ana, I... *care* about you. If you need space, I get that, but please take Scott or someone with you." I wanted to roll my eyes that he specifically said Scott instead of Ronan. Nothing would ever go on between me and a Ronan and I wasn't being so stubborn because I wanted anything to happen. I just wanted Alexander to trust me completely.

I nodded. "Okay," I could admit that it was reckless not bringing someone with me. Anything could have happened and if it did I'd be screwed.

Chapter Twenty Four

Hope you guys enjoy the new perspective!
Alexander's POV

"*Everything* needs to be on my desk by Thursday." I demanded to Paul, one of the many men I have spying on Dimitri. All I need is a little more proof to get this mother fucker.

"Mr. Knight I have my men doing all that's possible. We have to get his confession which is going to take some time—"

"We don't have time, Paul!" I snapped as I ran a hand through my hair. I knew that they were doing the best they could and Dimitri was *very* good at covering his tracks. I was getting married *tomorrow* so I knew Dimitri was more than ready to pull the trigger on his plan first. I had to be one step ahead.

I always wondered how Diana could ever marry a man like him. What blew my mind even more was wondering how a person such as Anastasia could come from a snake like Diana. Ana was the complete opposite of her mother. She was ambitious, funny, caring, and kind. I could keep going on and on about how they were opposites. Ana was a rarity in my world, she didn't seek money or fame. She was here with a purpose and everything about her was pure and truthful.

I remember meeting Anastasia for the first time, not when she walked into the room, stunning everyone in that beautiful dress she wore. No— she was thirteen. I was seventeen and had no romantic feelings towards her, but she captivated every eye in the place that night all those Christmas Eve's ago. She didn't belong here and everyone knew it. She was too good to be here amongst money hungry monsters like her mother and step-father.

It was my idea to bring her back to New York. I pitched the idea to Diana a few weeks before Anastasia arrived. I hadn't seen her in so long and I knew Diana was looking for a new way to get back into the spotlight. Once I saw her I was nearly stunned at how beautiful she was. I hated the way other men looked at her and that's when I had the better part of my idea. She would live with me. Not just for my sake of saving the company, but to protect her from men that I knew would just use her. I would never do that to her. Someone like her self deserved the world and I wanted to be the one to give it to her. But I knew she wouldn't be excited about

the arrangement.

I finally felt Anastasia and I were in a good place. I cared for her, that's certain. I didn't want her with anyone else, but that was a selfish thought. She hates it here and I would never force her to stay. I could only hope that maybe after all this was over she'd see this more than just some deal.

Today was my final day of work before the wedding *tomorrow*. My mother was keeping track of everything which was an immense help. Anastasia insisted on coming to work as well to help get any odds and ends done. That was another thing I admired about her. She was a hard worker and always up for a challenge.

Paul's long sigh brought me out of my thoughts and back to reality. "I'll do my best." He said and I hung up, not having anything else to say about it.

A soft knock came from my door and I was hoping it'd be Anastasia. Seeing her made me forget about everything going on. I was only able to focus on her. Even when she wasn't around my thoughts always drifted to her.

Much to my disappointment, it was one of my employees bringing me some papers I requested. He quickly went away after dropping them on my desk, closing the door behind him.

The phone began ringing and I looked down, letting out a grunt of annoyance.

"Hello?" I answered in a bored tone.

"Alexander, don't sound so happy to hear from me." Marcus, my little brother, said.

I rolled my eyes. "Did you need something?"

"I'm coming to the ceremony tomorrow." He announced. "I didn't even know until mom told me yesterday."

"It's none of your business, that's why." I curtly said.

He scoffed. "This isn't *business*, this is family." He retorted.

We had a complicated relationship, Marcus and I. He was a partier and too wild for his own good. He made decisions that only benefitted him. He was 24, but acted 15. I didn't have time to deal with his childishness. I left that to my mother who also was at her wits end with it. Marcus had only met one other woman I'd dated and that was back in my early twenties. It didn't go very well. He flirted with her the whole night just to piss me off. The relationship didn't work out anyway because she thought it would be a great idea to try and *sleep* with him.

"Because you've *always* cared about family." I said sarcastically. Marcus couldn't keep a secret, especially once the press got him going.

Marcus chuckled, he was finding this hilarious. He *loved* getting

under my skin. "See you tomorrow." He hung up, not letting me say anything in the return. *That annoying asshole*.

~>~

I shut my computer down for the day and exited my office, locking it after shutting the doors. I hadn't seen Ana all day and I started worrying. I looked around our floor and she was no where to be found. Her desk was perfectly set up and looked like it hadn't been touched. I saw Judy sitting at the desk finishing putting everything away before she went home.

"Have you seen Anastasia?" I asked her.

She looked up at me from over her metal framed glasses that had slipped down near the end of her nose. "She was in the copy room a few minutes ago."

I nodded and wished her a goodnight before taking the elevator down a few floors. Right when the doors opened I saw her standing near the printer while John was leaning against the wall. I could tell he was flirting with her from here by his smile and the way his eyes occasionally drifted away from her face. My jaw clenched as I watched him look at her the way only I wanted to be able to. He was walking on thin ice at this point. I walked over to them, my eyes never leaving his stance.

"Ana," I wrapped an arm around her waist as I stood next to her, placing a kiss on the top of her head.

She looked up at me with a small smile. "Hey, nice to see you come out of your cave." She joked. I hadn't left my office once today.

I smiled down at her, taking in everything about her. Her eyes were beautiful. They were the color of the ocean. If I looked at them any longer I knew I'd get lost.

I'd never felt like this around another woman— never. Anastasia occupied my thoughts day and night and there wasn't a second I didn't want her around. I grew accustom to having her around. A couple months wasn't long to know someone, but when you spend nearly every day with that person... Well I realized that I may care more about this woman than I thought.

"Mr. Knight," John's voice pissed me off, but I didn't let it show as I gave him a curt nod.

Hey at least I acknowledged his existence.

"Ready to go home?" I asked her.

She seemed to be uncomfortable as she looked between John and I. "Yeah, sure. Um, I'll see you later John."

"Bye, Ana." Did he really just call her that?

"It's Anastasia," I quickly said before pulling her away and into the elevator. I pressed the button to close the doors, not waiting for

him to share the space with us.

"Seriously, Alex?" She asked with disbelief in her tone. Her arms were crossed and lips were slightly pursued. She was so sexy when she was mad. I wanted nothing but to kiss her until every ounce of anger was gone.

I arched an eyebrow, playing dumb. "What?" I was trying to keep some self control to not reach out and touch her. I loved the way her body felt next to mine.

She rolled her beautiful eyes and scoffed at me. "You know *what."*

I smirked and shrugged. "He was flirting with what's mine."

She looked at me with wide eyes before shaking her head. "He was not! And I am not yours, Alexander."

I nodded and turned towards her, taking a few steps until her back was pressed against the wall. "You are," her breath hitched as lightly pressed my chest against hers. "*You* made that official when you insisted on marrying me." I said, my lips lifting into a smile.

She gulped and shook her head. "I'm not a possession to be owned." She was so strong and I found that beyond sexy. She couldn't be owned or controlled.

"You *are* mine, Anastasia Rivera. I don't want anyone looking at you the way John was tonight." Thinking about that asshole made my blood boil. Who did he think he was? Especially calling her *Ana.* He better watch himself otherwise he won't have a job here.

"He wasn't—"

"He was," I cut off her words. She was so naive about how beautiful she was. Every man looked at her, they couldn't help it. "Just admit it,"

She arched an eyebrow. "What?" It was adorable how she actually had to ask.

I leaned in a bit closer, my head dipping down to press a kiss against her jaw. Her hand lifted to push against my chest, but by her body leaning into my touch I knew she didn't want me away from here. Both my hands lifted the sides of her head, caging her in. "Anastasia," I said lowly as I lifted my face to look into her eyes. Her eyes were half open as she continued staring at my lips. "I know you want me just as bad as I want you." I lowly said.

"Alex—" I knew she was about to protest, but I couldn't let her deny it any longer.

"Say you're mine, Ana." I leaned in again to pepper kisses along her jaw and down her neck. "Say. " *Kiss*. "it." *Kiss.* She shook her head, not giving up on her stubbornness. "No? Well then I will." She looked confused as she stared at me with a heated gaze. "I'm yours, Anastasia." I knew what I was saying was selfish, but I couldn't keep it in any longer. I wanted her and would do anything to keep her

with me.

She gulped, her dough like eyes bigger than saucers. "Alex—"

"You don't have to answer right now—"

"Will you shut up?" Ana said with a small smile.

I arched and brow and nodded.

"I don't want anyone else. Not Ronan. Not John. Just *you."* Her words made me grin even wider. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. "But I'm terrified, Alex."

I lifted my hand to caress he soft cheek. "Don't be, baby. I will never let anyone hurt you. *I* won't hurt you. Anastasia, I can't imagine not seeing you every day. You're beautiful, strong, kind and so many things. I need you with me... *always."* I basically poured my heart out to her and I knew I was definitely losing my man card after that, but I didn't care. Anastasia deserves to know exactly what she means to me. I love her, but I couldn't tell her that right away. Especially if she didn't feel the same way.

Ana had her bottom lip tucked in as she bit down on it. All I wanted to do was kiss her in that moment. Whenever she did that it drove me crazy. "I wanna try... *us* being together. But— if I say yes to being together there can't be anymore little jealous tantrums." She said with a small smile as she gave a pointed look.

I nodded, swiftly kissing her lips. "Okay," I'd agree to anything she said as long as I had her by my side. I'd try my best to keep my promise, but we both knew there would come a time again when I'd get pissed another guy was looking at her the wrong way.

"Well then, Alexander Knight, I'm yours."

Chapter Twenty Five

Hey guys! So I posted another story called When Rain Falls. Please check it out and let me know what you think!

I finished getting ready, glancing in the mirror one last time before we left. I wore a white dress that flared at the bottom, stopping right below my knee. It had white, lace, quarter length sleeves and was off the shoulders. It was beautiful, but not too much. I thought I complimented my figure as well, hugging in the right places, but lose enough to fit like a glove.

I walked down the stairs and gathered my things along with my purse. "Alex, are you ready?" I called out to wherever he was.

A moment later footsteps came from the hallway, but stopped. I looked up and saw him eyeing me up and down. I did the same to him. He was wearing a dark navy tux with a white button up shirt underneath. He had finally gotten the hair cut he's been needed to style his hair perfectly like it was now. He was devastatingly handsome and today was no exception.

"You look stunning," he stated, walking toward me.

"You don't look so bad yourself." I complimented back, feeling more confident instead of shy from his comment.

He smirked and reached for me, pulling my hips to his. "Last chance to back out." He said, leaning in and pressing a kiss to the base of my neck.

"Well since you brought it up—" I said and his face lifted up with his eyes wide. I laughed at his reaction and shook my head. "No, no regrets."

"Good," Alex kissed my forehead before grabbing onto my hand and leading me to the elevator.

We arrived at the courthouse where Dimitri, Diana, and his parents were all there. The tension was thick as we approached them. Phillip and Dimitri both stood several feet away from each other not saying anything.

"Alexander," Amelia walked up to us smiling. She hugged each of us and kissed her son's cheek. "Anastasia you look absolutely beautiful."

I smiled. "Thank you," I locked eyes with my mom for a moment as I looked over the room. I thought I saw sadness in her expression, but I was probably just making things up in my head. I

wished she would have been the one to help me get ready and be the one rushing over to us. Instead she stood by her husband, not saying anything.

The judge walked into the room, greeting us as he walked to the front . "Are we ready to start?" Alex and I nodded.

I looked around once more. This was definitely not what I expected my wedding day to be like, but I wasn't upset. I stood here with someone I cared about and knew that I was doing this for something bigger than myself. I finally had made peace with the idea of all this and was focused on one thing— taking down Dimitri.

Alex held on to my hand as we walked up to the front. His parents stood on one side while Dimitri and Diana stood on the other.

"Can we hurry this up?" We all turned to look at Dimitri, including the judge. I narrowed my eyes at him as he stood there grimacing.

The judge looked between Alex and I to get out approval. I nodded and he proceeded.

The judge cleared his throat before doing so, holding and looking down at the book he was holding. "We are gathered here today to not only witness, but celebrate the marriage between Alexander Phillip Knight and Anastasia Rose Rivera." I mentally cursed at myself for not even knowing my future husband's middle name. There was so much we didn't know about one another.

"A wedding is such a wonderful occasion filled with hopes, dreams and excitement. May your love create a safe haven for you both on the journey that lies ahead of you. Lead with your hearts and take the time to do the simple things that will nurture your love. Deeply listen to each other—to your dreams, and to your frustrations. Be helpmates. Be playful in finding new ways to give your love anew to each other every day."

"Let your love be an inspiration to others to reach for what is good within us all. May your love be so abundant that you have plenty to share with the rest of us as well."

"It is your love that has brought us together here today. May it grow deeper and sweeter with each passing year." The judges words had me getting emotional and for a minute I thought to myself... *maybe I really do love Alex.* The thought scared me, as ridiculous as it may seem considering we're literally standing at the alter. "

"The rings?" My eyes widened at the judge's request. *I forgot to get my husband a damn wedding ring!*

As if Amelia could sense my fear she took a step forward and presented me with a gold band. "It was my father's wedding ring."

She whispered with a small smile before going back to stand by her husband. I muttered a thank you before turning back over to Alex who looked *very* amused.

The judge turned to Alex, also looking amused. "Do you, Alex, take Anastasia, to be your partner for life? Do you promise to walk by her side forever, and to love, help, and encourage her in all she does? Do you promise to take time to talk with her, to listen to her, and to care for her? Will you share her laughter, and her tears, as her partner, lover and best friend? Do you take her as your lawfully wedded wife for now and forevermore?

Alex, without taking his eyes away from mine, nodded. "Yes," I felt my heart clench and I had to press my tongue against the roof of my mouth to stop the unwanted tears. I always got emotional at the wrong time.

The judge turned to me. "Do you, Anastasia, take this man, Alexander, to be your partner in life? Do you vow to always love and support him? Through the good times *and* the bad? Do you promise the same he has now promised you? Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband and forevermore?"

I nodded quickly, smiling. "Yes,"

"And now, seal your promises with these rings, the symbol of your life shared together." The judge said.

"Anastasia, please repeat after me..." he spoke his words and I stood there, my eyes never leaving Alex's, repeating them to him.

"Alex, this ring I give as token and pledge,
as a sign of my love and devotion.
With this ring, I thee wed." I said.

"Alex, please repeat after me..."

"Anastasia, this ring I give as token and pledge,
as a sign of my love and devotion.
With this ring, I thee wed." Alex said.

"By the power invested in me, I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. Knight. You may now kiss the bride."

And he did just that.

Alex didn't waste any time reaching for me, one hand on my waist and the other cupping my cheek while leaving a tender kiss on my lips. He pulled away after a moment, going in for one last peck. "Mrs. Knight," he whispered, gazing down at me as the pad of his thumb grazed over the tear that fell.

"Mon fils a grandi!" Amelia sobbed, saying something in French. She went over to us, hugging and kissing our cheeks. "Welcome to the family, Anastasia."

I smiled widely at her, hugging her again. I saw my mom over Amelia's shoulder, not looking in my direction. I pulled away and

walked over to her.

"I can't believe you went through with it." Diana mumbled only loud enough for me to hear.

I ignored her comment and decided to not stoop to her level. "We're having a get together at Alex's parent's house if you'd like to come." My mother has been no mother to me, that was obvious. But she was my mother after all. I didn't want our relationship to be completely ruined without at least trying to fix it. But I did my part and that was the best I could do.

I spent years trying to figure out why I wasn't good enough for her to stick around. I envied girls who had mom's to talk to and go shopping with. It wasn't until now that I realized that *she wasn't* good enough for *me.*

"For *what?"* She scoffed. "It's not like we're really celebrating anything."

I nodded, accepting her answer. "Okay," I didn't want to fight, not here, not in front of Alex's parents. I turned on my heel to walk back to Alex who greeted me with open arms.

I hugged him back as he held me closer to him. "Everything okay?" He asked.

I nodded, pulling away to look up at his handsome face. "It is," And for the first time in a while, everything was okay.

~>~

"Congratulations!" Everyone cheered as we stepped through the door. There were many people here, all whom I'd never even met before.

Before I knew it I was being pulled and hugged my various people that seemed more excited than we were about finally being married. Alexander introduced me to most everyone. Most of them being close family and friends.

"Ana, this is Nick." Alex said, gesturing to the man with curly, dark brown, hair.

Nick smiled and pulled me in for a hug. "So nice to finally meet you. Alexander here can't stop talking to you." He teased.

I blushed slightly as I smiled. "Good things I hope."

Nick nodded. "Definitely good things," he laughed. "Sometime he wouldn't even shut up—"

"Alright, alright..." Alex said to him with a playful eye roll.

I smiled up at him and playfully pinched his cheek. "Aw, Alex, aren't you sweet."

He grunted as he swatted my hand away making Nick and I laugh.

Phillip's voice had all of us turning to the front of the the room. Alex's hand wrapped around my waist to pull me closer as we

listened to his dad. "Thank you all for coming to celebrate my son's wonderful marriage to Anastasia. You know, for the longest time we thought he was gay." Everyone laughed and I looked up to see Alex roll his eyes. I smiled at him and pulled his lips down to mine. I loved that that was an ongoing joke in their family. "But here's a toast to the *bride* and groom!" Everyone raised their glasses and the sound of clinking them with one another filled the room.

Alexander leaned down once more to place a sweet kiss on my lips causing everyone to either clap or his friends to yell out *woo's* and *other* words that made me want to blush right then and there.

The rest of the night we spent talking to everyone and it was the most fun I'd had since I got here in the beginning of summer. Alexander's family was much like him, charming and funny. The close friends that were there, like Nick, also seemed like great people.

Though not how I imagined my wedding day, I wouldn't have wanted to spend it any other way.

THEY FINALLY DID IT WHAAAAT. Lol okay yessss they finally got married.

Also check out this meme lol

Chapter Twenty Six

Guys this is so random but I want a donut so bad. Like a double chocolate one from Dunkin Donuts omg
ALSO A PSA FOR YOU ALL
I WILL NOT BE WRITING A SEX SCENE. There are just far too many young readers to do that. That being said— eventually there will be some steamier parts, but in like, a tasteful PG-13 sort of way. Sorry if that disappoints anyone I just want to make this readable for many different ages. But if you're like 13 and uncomfortable with any sort of sexual content well... this isn't the story for you lol

We got home late that night. It had been so much fun spending time with his family and a few friends. It was a small get together, but I loved it. The only thing I would have changed is that my family would be there.

I had called Nora earlier to tell her it was official. She was happy, but sad for the same reason I was. Julia still wasn't talking to me so I was trying to give her the space she wanted. I couldn't blame her for being angry. I would be if the roles were reversed.

My father luckily still had no idea what was happening. I hated lying to him, but we all agreed as a family that it's what was best.

I stepped out of the elevator with my hand in Alexander's warm one. He hadn't left me side the whole night. Even if our marriage was arranged, it didn't feel like it. I had fallen for Alex despite all the negative things surrounding us. He was kind and gentle. Everything you could want in a partner.

Alex lifted our arms, twirling me around gently before bringing me into his chest. "We did it," He said triumphantly.

I nodded, locking my arms around his neck. "You're stuck with me for now." I joked.

His eyes softened as he lifted his hand to caress my cheek. I instinctively leaned into his touch. "Forever," I furrowed my eyebrows slightly at his words. "Ana, I don't want to let you go. You showed me something I thought I could never have. I love you, Anastasia. I want you to be mine for the rest of my life because I can't even see myself without you."

His words wrapped around me and held me tight. I was thankful he had his arms supporting me. "I love you too," My voice croaked

at the last part. I would have never guessed something so wonderful could come from something so terrible. I was in love with Alexander.

Alex's smile widened before he leaned down to kiss me, his hands holding my face. His lips tenderly caressed mine and his hands moved down to pull me closer by my hips.

I ran my fingers around his hair, trying to bring him even closer to me. I tugged on the ends and he groaned in approval. His tongue swiped along my bottom lip after nipping it lightly with his teeth. I opened, letting him deepen our kiss.

Alexander broke our kiss for a moment to carry me bridal style. I yelped slightly at his sudden movement, but was quickly pacified by his kisses again.

I didn't even realize we had left the living room until I was being laid down on a bed. *His* bed. He hovered over me, gazing down. "Ana, we can take things slow—"

I pulled him down to me, shushing him with my kiss. I didn't want to go slow now. I wanted him and I knew he wanted me too as he pressed his body into mine.

He broke away and peppered kisses down my jaw and neck. "I want you," He huskily said against my skin. His words sent chills to spike throughout my body. "Tell me to stop." His words were strained and I knew he was trying his best to contain himself.

"I want you too," My voice was barely audible. But from his stillness I knew that he did in fact hear me.

He looked at me once again, his eyes darkened with *want*. "Are you sure?"

I nodded. "I'm sure," I breathlessly said. With my approval he pressed his lips against mine, not roughly, but with a sort of urgency.

Alex wasted no time, sitting up to take off his suit jacket. His one hand stayed by the side of my head as his other trailed down the side of body. He leaned in again to kiss me. He squeezed my hip before reaching down at the material to hike up my dress so it showed most of my thighs. He hooked his hand behind my knee, pulling me impossibly close to him.

My hands fumbled with each button on his shirt. He noticed my struggle and quickly tugged the shirt off revealing his toned chest. I ran my hands down from this shoulders to his abs and back up again. Alex groaned his approval.

"I love you, baby." He huskily said as he looked into my eyes with a heated gaze. The moonlight spilling into the room and being our only way of seeing anything. The dim light was comforting and made every unexpected touch intensified. I loved the feeling of him

being so close and whispering sweet nothings in my ear. I never wanted this night to end. Alexander made me feel things I'd never felt before.

"I love you, Alex." I said breathlessly as he trailed more kisses from my neck and to my shoulder.

I felt him tug at the material of the dress. He sat up again and was off the bed. I looked at him with furrowed eyebrows until he pulled me to my feet, his eyes never leaving mine.

"Turn around," He said gently.

I did what he said, feeling anxious. His hands gently trailed down from my shoulders all the way to my wrists. I then felt the zipper slowly slide down my back. A burning sensation from wherever he touch. I felt Alex lean in as he placed a tender kiss to the base of my neck. I leaned back into him and hummed as a response.

I felt his smile against my skin as he lightly turned me around by my waist. He once again gazed down at me while lightly pushing the dress off my shoulders.

I squirmed slightly, feeling uncomfortable and vulnerable all of a sudden. I tried to look away but his hand caught my chin. "Don't hide from me, Ana. I love everything about you." He assured.

"Alex—"

He leaned down and placed a kiss on my lips, successfully ridding any of my anxiety he knew I had. He continued kissing me as I felt my dress fall to the floor, pooling around my ankles.

Alex broke the kiss and looked down. I knew my cheeks turned a shade of pink from him blatantly looking over my body that was barely covered by the lingerie. His lips turned up in a smirk and I rolled my eyes at him. *Same old Alexander.* "*Oh, baby*, the things I want to do to you." He groaned, pulling me by my hips.

I laughed lightly at his words and how different they were from the sweet ones just moments ago. "You're crazy,"

He nodded. "For you," just like he said weeks ago. Alex lifted me up and back onto the bed, hovering over me. "I don't think I'm ever going to let you out of this bed." He smirked.

I put on a smirk of my own. "Who said I wanted you to?" That was enough talking for him.

The rest of the night was spent in pure ecstasy. Alexander took his time with everything and made *sure* I was satisfied. With everything we did he always put my comfort first. I tried to do the same for him, but he insisted on focusing on me. I was flattered and overwhelmed all at the same time.

I didn't know how I needed up being so lucky, but I was. Alexander was one of the most caring and loving man I'd even met. He had this way of making me feel like everything is okay. We still

had things we needed to learn about each other, but I was damn excited to do it if it meant I'd be spending my days with him.

~>~

Last night was like a dream. A wonderful dream that like most good dreams, had to come to an end. But luckily, waking up this morning was just as satisfying as the night before.

I woke up the next morning from the sun shining in through the curtains. I was undoubtably in the most comfortable bed I'd ever been in sleeping in the most comfortable way. I laid on my back while Alexander was basically wrapped around me. His arm slung across my stomach as his head was just above mine as he faced towards me. Our legs were tangled together mixed in with the thin grey top sheet. The comforter must've been kicked off during... *Well you know.*

I smiled to myself as I looked over to see Alex sleeping peacefully, softly snoring. I lifted my hand to moved some hair that had fallen onto his face. It was probably slightly creepy watching him sleep, but I was his wife now so he'd just have to deal with my weird-ass.

He stirred slightly, snuggling closer into me while tightening his grip. Not that I didn't love being close to him, but suffocating to death on our first day of marriage didn't seem like the best plan. "Alex," I said gently, hoping that'd be enough to wake up. He groaned slightly as his eyes continued to be shut. I rolled my eyes, but was amused. "Alexander, you are killing me." I grunt as I attempted to pry his arm off my waist.

"Shh," he mumbled against the pillow.

I pinched his arm and that got him to look at me with his eyes still half closed from sleep. "I shouldn't have to deal with this abuse." His voice was husky and rasped.

I laughed. "You?! You're not the one dying from suffocation!" I exclaimed.

He chuckled lowly, releasing his grip only to reach his hand to tuck a lose piece of hair behind my ear. "I love you."

I smiled at his words. "I love you,"

He moved his body to hover over mine as he leaned down to kiss me tenderly. I lifted my hands to hold his face, feeling the slight stubble on his face. Alex deepened our kiss and I moaned in content. That caused Alexander to slightly rock his body against mine *showing* that he wanted me again.

We didn't get out of bed until it was nearly three o clock. Not that I minded, but eventually our morning breath was too much to handle and I had to get up to shower.

I stood up, much to his protest, with the sheet wrapped around my body. I stepped forward, but was instantly brought back, the

back of my legs hitting the bed. I looked behind me to see Alex smirking while tugging the end of the sheet. "*Alex*," I warned.

He chuckled with an innocent look on his face. "*Yes*?"

I narrowed my eyes at him, but my lips twitched into a smile. "I need to shower, let go."

His eyes darkened slightly as his smirk remained. He stood up, *in all his naked glory*. I averted my eyes elsewhere to hide the blush that took over my cheeks. "Can you like, put pants on?" I asked.

He took deliberate steps towards me, shaking his head. "Why would I do that if we're showering?"

I looked back over to him with a dead-pan expression. "*I* am showering. You can wait,"

He laughed and stood in front of me, pulling my hips closer to his — only the thin sheet separating us. "Come on, baby. Don't get shy with me now."

I rolled my eyes and swatted at his chest with one hand while the other clung to the sheet. "*So clingy,"* I joked. "But fine, since you can't seem to stay away from me..." I laughed as he squeezed me hips and dipped his head down to my neck. His stubble tickling my skin.

"Damn right I can't stay away from you." He huskily said before leading us into his bathroom.

Chapter Twenty Seven

I HATE SNOW. I HATE IT. I HATE IT. I HATE IT. I just spent the last HOUR shoveling this fluffy ass MESS. I want to DIE.

ANOTHER NOTE— I've been feeling inspired lately lmao I wrote another story and it's called In His Arms. Check it out and if you like it please vote! Also vote for this one too! You guys are the bomb.

Okay I'm done being dramatic. Here's the next chapter and can we collectively pray that summer will come soon. Thanks.

The weekend came and went way too fast. Alexander and I didn't even leave his home until yesterday when I *forced* him to go to work.

Tuesday came and was hands down the most boring day of the week. There wasn't anything going on since all the meetings were usually later in the week. For the past couple hours I'd just been organizing through Alex's papers. For a successful business man he was extremely unorganized, but I don't blame him for being that way. He's got so much to deal with the last thing on his mind is to put a file with other files alike.

Even as I sat there looking at various papers, trying to focus on the task at hand, I couldn't. My mind always seemed to drift back to Alex. This past weekend was one of the best weekends I'd ever had. Being with him made me happier than I ever thought I could be.

A loud noise from the room behind me, Alex's office, made me jump slightly. I stood up and opened the door quickly. Alex sat at his desk, head in his hands, with papers scattered around the floor. "What's wrong?" I asked, slightly panicked.

He raked a rough hand through his hair and shook his head. "Dimitri had the contract dropped off this morning." Alex breathed out. His voice was low and full of disappointment.

I walked over to him, picking up papers as I approached his desk. "What does it say?"

He kept looking at the contract with a hard glare. "Everything we tried to avoid."

I looked between him and then the papers. I picked up the contract and flipped through it. It stated that everything Alex owned will be signed over to Dimitri including all the foreign accounts and deals he had with other businesses nation and world

wide. "There's got to be a way out of this..." I said more to myself. I continued reading through the dozens of papers in the stack and cake across multiple threats to release the information of his parents citizenship. That had me thinking... how does he know so much about that?

"I swear I'll put that fucker six feet under." Alexander growled. "Ana, if I lose everything just know that I will still provide for you —"

"Why did you parents lose citizenship?" I asked, cutting him off. Something just doesn't seem right. Any of it.

He rolled his eyes. "Ana, have you not listened to anything I said?"

"Alex, *focus.* How did it happen?" I know he was panicking, but he needed to concentrate on this right now.

He shook his head before sighing. "Something in their citizen papers."

I tapped on my chin in thought. That just doesn't add up. How could they just cancel their visa's over one forgotten piece of paper? I stood up and went over to Alex's filer drawer. "You have their papers right?" I asked.

I heard his chair squeak as he stood from it and walked over to me. "This one," He said, bending down and opening the drawer on the bottom. I crouched down to see a file stating his parents names. I pulled the thick folder out and sat in *his* chair behind the desk. Placing the folder onto the desk. "There was a legal document that they claimed never to be sent in and since it was passed due, they wouldn't accept a new copy of the paper." He further explained.

I pursed my lips and leaned forward on the desk. That just doesn't all add up. How could there be a paper missing from this *extremely* important document? I highly doubt this is something Phillip wouldn't double check before sending in. "Do you know which paper it was?"

He nodded and walked around his desk to the tall filing cabinet. Alex crouched down and pulled out another folder from the back. "Page two is missing." He said, putting the papers in front of me.

I flipped it open and began scanning, right away noticing the missing page. "What was this one?"

"The *most* important. It basically stated that they would oblige to the law of the land. They're signatures and all their important information was on the piece of paper."

I turned my head to look at him with an arched brow. "You really think it just went *poof*?"

Alex shook his head. "No,"

"Me neither," I muttered and looked back down to the papers. "I

think someone took it."

He leaned down so one hand held him up on the desk and the other rested on the back of the chair, looking over my shoulder to look at the papers. "But who?" He pondered.

I sat there, thinking some more. It had to be someone close to Phillip because he wouldn't just let anyone near these kind of papers. "Did your dad have some kind of assistant or..." I tailed off, allowing him to fill in my blank.

"I don't think so," He said under his breath, standing straight before he began pacing. "Actually," he stopped his pacing to turn toward me. "he worked closely *with* Dimitri during the mid 80's. My father basically took Dimitri under his wing and showed him the ways of business." *Ok yeah that would have been good information to know, Alexander!*

"He had to be the one to take it then." I stood from my seat. Dimitri had to be the one to take it. It didn't surprise me that he would betray someone that was trying to help him.

"That's what I've always thought, but my father has given him the benefit of the doubt." Alex grumbled, his palm coming up to rub the side of his face.

"It's obvious this is his doing. Dimitri doesn't have loyalty to anyone. He's a snake. He probably wanted to take over your father's company from the beginning." I reasoned, trying to understand the mind of an evil person. "But why now?" Why would he bring up all of this now? Phillip doesn't even run the company anymore.

"Because he was waiting for the right time." Alex figured. "He waited until he absolutely needed my father's company." He shook his head as he pieces together everything. "He waited until I took over, especially after all the success I've had." It all makes sense. Alex has made Knight Corporations nearly four times more money than his father ever did.

Dimitri must have been planning this for years now. He must have countless papers and such stored *somewhere.* There's no way he doesn't. "I have an idea." I said, standing. Alex quirked an eyebrow and gestured for me to go on. "I can get into his office."

He looked at me like I had two heads. "How do you plan on doing that exactly?"

"I can go over there and pretend we had a fight or something. My mother won't suspect anything. In fact, she'll probably love that I went to her instead of going to a hotel." Secretly of course. There's no way she'd ever admit to me about how she actually felt.

He shook his head, walking over to me. "No way, I'm not sending you over there." His voice was stern.

But I rolled my eyes, despite that I knew he was just trying to

protect. Sometimes he just really needs to accept the help. "I'm doing it," I crossed my arms.

"No, Anastasia. I'm serious." His next step toward me made me take a step back. I wasn't going to let him try and *think* he can intimidate me into some kind of submission. I know he wasn't intentionally doing that, but Alexander was used to getting his way. *He's in for a quite the awakening.*

"So am I,"

He let out a deep breath, pinching the bridge of his nose with his eyes closed. "*Please* try and listen to me for once."

I scoffed. "Alexander, calm down. Nothing bad is going to happen." *I hope.* "If I can't get in then we'll try something else." I was confident that I could do this. I knew there were answers we needed in that office of Dimitri's and we were going to get them one way or another.

He stood there, looking at me with uncertainty and his jaw hard. I knew he was fighting with himself to just give in and let me do this. Apart of me wanted to crumble and say I wouldn't do it. I hated seeing Alex upset and I knew he felt the same why about me. But sometimes in order for things to happen you have to take risks. I reached for his hands to hold in mine as I stood inches away. "Trust me,"

He sighed after a long moment and nodded. "Okay— but if he tries to do anything you have to tell me."

I nodded. "I will, don't worry." I reached up to press my lips to his, a kiss sealing my promise.

Later that day we got home and it was time to call Diana. If this first part worked then I knew we'd be able to get into that office. She was a dense woman and since she had no knowledge of what was going on with her husband she won't suspect a thing.

Alex sat next to me on the couch with his hand wrapped around my waist. He'd always been touchy, but ever since we got married he hasn't been able to keep his hands off. *Not that I minded.* But I always got red when he did it in front of people. Lucky for Alex he truly doesn't care what people think.

I held the phone out in front of me on speaker phone and we waited as it dialed. After nearly a minute she answered, her usual snarky tone.

"Mom, I need a favor." I said quickly, fake sadness seeping into my tone.

"What is it, Anastasia?" She, however, still remained to sound bored.

"Could I stay with you for the night? Alex and I had a fight."

She let out a heavy sigh that made me roll my eyes. I glanced

over to Alex to see him do the same thing. "I *guess*," she said.

I smirked. "Okay, I'll be over soon." Diana said a quick goodbye before hanging up the phone. I looked back over at alex with an arch brow.

He just shrugged, knowing what I was thinking. "I still think it's a bad idea." He sat back on the couch, bringing me with him.

I rested my head on his shoulder and hand across his torso. "It'll be okay,"

His hand was caressing my shoulder as he pressed a kiss against the top of my head. "Let's hope you're right."

Ok I don't know why, but this chapter took forever to write. I've been working on it for nearly three weeks! Ahhhh

A/N

GUYS! Ok this is not an update and I'm sorry if you thought it was, but I have a question! So I've actually gotten quite a few requests to do a more *detailed* scene about Alex and Anastasia's wedding night. Meaning **cough** sex **cough** scene.

Let me know in the comments if you guys actually want that and if so then I will create another 'story' technically that will hold the private chapters.

That being said... in order to view those chapters you'll probably have to follow me, but after you're done you can just ya know... unfollow lol.

So yeah let me know what you guys think and if I get a majority vote to do so, I'll have it out by Sunday.

ONE LAST THING!!!!

I'm trying really hard to get this moved up on the *What's Hot* list for romance so PLEASE VOTE! I'd really appreciate it!

Thanks!! Xxxx

Chapter Twenty Eight

Hello this is 911, what's your emergency?
Me: Hi yeah I have writer's block help

GUYS idk why but this chapter took so so long to write. It may not seem like it, but most of the previous chapters were written probably two months before this one. BUT WHATEVER BECAUSE I DID IT. Lol I hope you guys enjoy this chapter! ALSO I kind of changed the way I imagine Anastasia a bit? Probably because of the name, but I basically picture her as Dakota Johnson. Besides I was looking at the girl I had in mind before but like idk she just doesn't fit the part anymore for me. Ok but yeah so that's her above! ❤□❤□

PLEASE VOTE IF YOU LIKE THIS CHAPTER! ❤□

The door swung open and Diana was standing there, looking between me and the bag that was in my hand. "Come in," She stepped aside and I walked past her into the house.

"Thanks for—"

"I knew you two wouldn't be good together." She said as she shut the door. Turning back towards me, Diana has a hint of a smile on her lips.

I bit my tongue to not say anything that'd give me away. "I'm going to put this upstairs," I walked up the stairs and as I got to the top, I nearly lost my balance as a toy helicopter came diving down towards my head. I quickly swatted it away and it landed on the floor with a thud and the top wings slowing down

"Hey," I heard a whiney voice.

I looked up to see Collin standing by his bedroom door scowling. "Sorry," I muttered.

His eyebrowas were furrowed as he stormed over to grab his now broken toy. "You broke the wing." He whined, sending a glare my way.

He's just like his father.

His face was a strong resemblance to Dimitri, but maybe he would be different. It makes me feel uneasy at the thought of another Dimitri in the world. Especially since I'd actually be related to him. My mom wasn't much a parent, clearly. Most likely Collin's closest thing to a parent would be the maid.

"It's not broken." I said, setting my bag down before examining

the toy. He complained when I took it from him. I tweaked one of the parts and pushed the button on his controller and *vuala* it started working again. "Here," I handed it back to him.

"Thanks." He muttered before going back to his room

I went to the room I'll be staying in and set my bag down. The second I entered the house I wanted to run back to Alex, but I especially felt that way now. I checked my phone and smiled when I saw the ten texts he'd sent me. They were all saying that he missed me and that this is still a terrible idea. Now that I'm here I'm starting to think he's right. Either way I've got to go through with it. Finding actual evidence against him is our only way out of this situation.

An hour or so went by and there was a knock on the door. It slowly opened and a maid I didn't recognize walked in. She was younger, maybe a little older than I was. Her blonde hair was tied back into a bun and he uniform dress was shorter than any maid I'd seen.

"Dinner is ready, ma'am." I nearly cringed at her calling me *ma'am.*

"Okay... Where's Milly?" I asked. I didn't see her when I walked in either.

"She was... dismissed." She said with a sad expression "I'm Annabelle and happy to help you with whatever you may need." With that she shut the door. Dismissed? They fired her. I can't believe it. She'd been here since they first got married.

I went downstairs and into the large dining room where Dimitri, Diana, and Collin sat. They weren't saying anything, just sitting there eating their meal.

Mom glanced at me before looking back down at her plate. Dimitri didn't bother sparing a glance. Instead he ate and scrolled through his phone.

The sound of my heels were the only sound in the room as I walked and took a seat next to Collin. He gave me a weird look, but I ignored it and soon a plate was brought out.

I couldn't even imagine growing up in a household like this. My poor little brother doesn't even know any different. It makes me sick just thinking about it. My father may not have had money, but he sure as hell has happiness. I wouldn't trade my childhood for the world.

"When are you divorcing Knight?" Dimitri asked.

I looked up at him to see a sinister smirk on his face. My eyes narrowed. "We're not."

"But you're here." *No shit, Sherlock.*

"Good observation." I sarcastically said.

His smirk fell into a scowl. I knew he wouldn't bring anything up about trying to take over Alex's company in front of my mother. He wasn't *that* stupid. "You should leave him before it's too late." I knew what his words meant. They had a secret message that he knew I'd get.

"I could say the same for you." I said as sweetly as possible.

His jaw was hard as his eyes turned into slits. I swear if looks could kill I'd be dead by now. "Anastasia—"

"Desert?" Annabelle came out with a tray of assorted deserts, cutting him off. She passed out each plate and I took note on how he was watching her every move. Not watching— *checking her out.* I also noticed the *not so* subtle wink she sent his way.

My mother and Collin were oblivious to the obvious flirting going on right in front of them. Of course Collin is too young to really even know what flirting is. My mom was looking down for an awfully long time and I had a feeling she wasn't so oblivious to it after all.

After dinner we all went to our rooms. I felt my phone buzz and answered quickly when I saw Alex's name.

"Hello?"

"Hi, baby. How is everything?" I wanted to melt at the sound of his voice. It sounded huskier and I knew that meant he was getting tired. Alexander was kind of like an old man. It's like right when eight o clock hit he was ready to for sleep.

"Do you really need me to answer?"

He sighed. "That bad?"

"Just usual. I wouldn't expect anything else. Plus I think Dimitri is cheating on my mom." I lowered my voice especially saying the last part.

"With who?" I heard noise in the background and another sigh. He probably just got into bed. I wish I was there with him.

"The maid." I snorted. How cliche was that?

"Doesn't surprise me." He muttered. "I wish you were here." *He read my mind.*

"Me too," I sighed. "I should hang up before anyone hears me. I have a feeling Diana has spies all over the place." I half joked.

"Alright be careful. I love you, Ana."

"I love you."

The next few hours went by and it was now nearly midnight. I almost fell asleep a few times, but somehow woke up each time. I got out of the bed and grabbed my phone before opening the door.

I stuck my head out and checked the hallway to see if anyone was there. When the coast was clear I walked quietly downstairs. The whole house was dark and I figured everyone was sleeping. The

moon shining in from the windows was the only light source I had to see.

I walked passed each room until I finally found the door for Dimitri's office. I reached for the handle and twisted— but of course it's locked.

I silently cursed and then took out my phone to turn on the flashing light. I looked all around maybe for a spare key under the rug or in the plant down the hall.

Nothing.

I came back to the door and reached at the top of the frame. At the tip of my fingers I felt something cold and when I finally was able to get a grip on it, I grabbed it and wanted to cheer when I saw it was the key I needed.

I looked around one more time before unlocking the door, opening it and quietly shutting. I locked it just incase someone were to come in.

Across from me was his desk and behind that was storage cabinets and shelves. I got behind the large wooden desk and opened each drawer, flipping through the papers and files he had in there.

I continued looking and had to stop when I came to the next drawer because it was locked.

Shit.

Again, I searched for a key and had a feeling I wouldn't be so lucky this time. Maybe I'd just YouTube how to unlock something without the key...

My head snapped up when I heard giggling from the other side of the drawer. Quickly I hid in the best place I could...

Under his desk...

The door opened the second I got under. I brought my knees to my chest and put my hand over my mouth to keep from making any noise.

"Mr. Sterling *stop."* Some girl giggled flirtatiously.

Barf.

"I can't keep my hands off you, Buttercup." Dimitri purred.

Buttercup?! What the actual hell. If Alex ever called me anything like that I'd have a few choice words for him and they certainly wouldn't nice.

"I want you to do what you did last night." She cooed and I now recognized that she was the maid from earlier.

"How about right on this desk?" *Oh God no.* My eyes went wide.

"No! I just cleaned that. Take me to the spare bedroom." *For the love of all things holy, please take her to the spare bedroom.*

"Whatever I just want you. *Now." Ew. Ew. Ew.*

A moment later after hearing them suck each other's faces off, they scrambled out the door and a thud hit the ground along with the door once again shutting.

I crawled out from under and sat up, but bumped my head in the process on the chair. I groaned as I fully stood, grabbing the back of my head. I pulled my phone out again and used the flashlight to shine around the room.

Keys.

I saw keys on the ground right by the door

I picked them up and smiled when I saw a smaller one that looked like it was meant for a small lock like the one on the drawer.

I went back to the desk and tried it, it fit perfectly. I twisted the key and the drawer slid open. It looked like all of the other drawers, but I had a feeling these documents were a little more secret.

I flipped through each one and stopped when I saw a ground of papers that were in a folder that read *Accounts.* I opened it and saw they were the bank statements and transaction papers from the accounts he had been using to keep and transfer money with Diana's and Collin's names.

I smiled when I saw that this dumbass signed his name on each paper giving legibility and evidence that he was in fact embezzling money.

I put the folder down beside me when I was finished looking through it and then continued searching. A while went by before I had completely finished going through his things.

I also managed to find the missing piece of paper from the citizenship papers for Alexander's parents. Everything I needed was here.

I got my phone and snapped pictures of each paper that I'd need. After I finished with that I gathered them and put them back in the drawer. I crouched down, pulling it open to slide the folder back in its place.

That's when I heard the door shut.

My eyes went wide and my breath got caught in my throat.

"Anastasia." *Dimitri.* He flickered the lights on and I knew there was no hiding now.

I swallowed any courage I had left and slowly stood to meet his intense glare. "Dimitri."

His lips were turned down into a scowl and the middle of his eyebrows creased. "What do you think you're doing in here?"

I looked around the room. "Um... looking for the bathroom?"

His eye twitched as he took a deliberate step forward. "You're as dumb as I thought. Alexander sent you over here right?"

I shook my head quickly. "No. It was all me."

Dimitri chuckled darkly. "It's going to be some fun to watching him burn to the ground along with his company." A sinister smirk took over his face.

"What is wrong with you?" I questioned. "What did they do to make you this angry?"

His lips fell once again into his frown he seemed to always wear. "That family is *pathetic* and doesn't deserve anything they have. It should have been *me* on top." He growled out sounding like a child. "

"You will never be them, Dimitri. What you're doing is wrong." I said to him. "Don't you feel bad for using your own child's name to embezzle money? Or your wife?" I questioned. "Or messing up Phillip and Amelia's citizenship?"

He rolled his eyes and took another step towards me. "Save your breath, Anastasia. Phillip was just in my way and I needed to get rid of him. Unfortunately that family is like a bunch of cockroaches that won't die." He growled in annoyance. "Give me your phone." He demanded.

I shook my head. "No."

Suddenly his arms came out and shoved me harshly against the wall, my head slamming back as well. I groaned from the impact and grip he had on my arms. "Give. Me. The. Phone."

"Go to hell." I spat.

His hand reached out and swiftly took the phone from my back pocket. I tried to fight him, but I couldn't. With one arm keeping my in place, he took my hand and used the finger print to open the phone.

"Let's see what we have here." He said tauntingly. A smirk took over his face once again and I knew he found the pictures. "You're a fool, Anastasia." His eyes met mine. "Just like your mother. It was so easy for me to use her name on those accounts. She'll never know because you will never tell her. I'll *kill* you if you do."

My lip curled in disgust and it took everything in my not to scream. But I didn't want to wake anyone else in the house. "Get the *fuck* off me."

He chuckled. "Shut up." He continued looking through my phone. "The pictures are deleted, now only one thing left to do." Suddenly the phone was dialing and then Alexander answered.

"Ana, are you alright?" Alex asked.

"Nice try, Knight. I expect the papers I sent over to you to be signed tomorrow. It's over." Dimitri said with a smile.

"You son of a bitch. If you touch her—" Dimitri hung up the phone, not letting him finish.

He let go of me and I dropped to the floor. I didn't realize he was

holding me up so much. My arms were sore from his grip and I knew there would be a bruise. "You're a monster." I said, looking up at him with narrowed eyes.

He shrugged and dropped the phone lazily on the ground. I watched as it shattered on the floor. "I've been called worse. Now get out."

I stood up with my now broken phone in hand. "It's not over, Dimitri." I said lowly.

Dimitri rolled his eyes. "Quit being pathetic, Anastasia. It suits you, but I can't stand to look at it any longer."

I brushed past him, my shoulder roughly against his. I didn't look back at him as I slammed his door shut.

A small smirk took over my lips. He doesn't know what he just did. I went up to the room I was staying in and lifted my shirt to reveal the recorder I had taped to myself just incase anything happened.

He fell right into a trap.

Chapter Twenty Nine

Alright you might want to kill me after reading this note, but I'm postponing the private chapters only because I just don't feel like it truly adds anything to the story. Yeah I know people like the more intimate scenes, but I feel like it's unnecessary. I most likely will post them later after I finish the story, but for right now I'm focusing on the *story* aspect. I will post something in this book about the private chapters once I finally do put it up. Sorry again for the false hope, I know a lot of you wanted it. ❤

Loud banging comes from downstairs and I already know it's Alexander. I rush down the stairs to see him and Dimitri nearly toe to toe— looking like he could kill him right there and then.

"Alex," I said, catching his attention.

He rushed over to me and pulled my into his arms. "Are you alright?" He asked, his voice was low and I knew he had been worrying about me.

I nodded and put my arms around his torso. "Yes, I'm fine."

"You two are pathetic. Get out of my house."
Dimitri said in annoyance.

Alexander turned around, but kept me behind him almost as if he was protecting me. "We're leaving you sick *fuck*." He growled out.

"Go back to your penthouse and enjoy it while it lasts." Dimitri taunted.

Alexander went to go towards him, but my hand reached out to go around his arm. "He's not worth it, Alex. Come on." I pulled him down the rest of the stairs and out the door.

We silently walked to the car and go into the backseat. George was driving luckily. I wouldn't want Alexander behind the wheel of anything at the moment. As soon as we got in we drove off speedily.

His arm was around my shoulders as he brought my closer to him, leaving a kiss on the top of my head. "Are you alright? I told you this was a bad idea. If you would just listen to me for once—"

"Alex,"

"Did he hurt you? I'll kill—"

"Alex!"

"What?" He said in frustration, his other hand raking through his

hair. "Why are you smiling? This isn't funny, Anastasia."

I rolled my eyes and lifted my shirt to which his hands immediately stopped. "Baby, I'm always in the mood for you, but George is here and I'm not giving him a show."

My mouth fell as I pushed at his shoulder. "Mind out of the gutter, Alexander Knight." I scolded. "I think you might want to know what I have under here."

His eyebrow raised. "I think I already know."

I chuckled. "I don't think you do." I raised it once again and his eyes went wide when he saw the recorder taped to my side.

"You... recorded him?"

I smiled and nodded. "Yup. His confession and all."

A wide smile took over his handsome face and he let out a large breath that was mixed with a laugh. "Anastasia... I..." he was speechless.

"I *also* backed up the photos I took from my phone which he thought he deleted. They're in an email that I sent to you."

He quickly opened his phone and there the email was. When he opened it all of the pictures of the documents were right there.

"I told you—" he cut me off with his lips smashing down on mine.

He hands went to hold my face as he passionately and urgently kissed me. I pulled away when I felt him try to deepens the kiss. "I thought you didn't want to give George a show." I smiled as I said breathlessly.

He chuckled. "I can bend my own rules." He presses his lips back on mine for a moment before pulling away.

His arm went back over my shoulders and he pulled me into him once again. "I love you, baby."

"I love you." I hummed, content in his arms.

~>~

I sat at my desk, tapping my pencil anxiously. Dimitri would be stepping out of the elevator any moment now with full intentions of taking Alexander's company.

Little does he know...

In Alexander's office, two police chiefs and three FBI agents were waiting for him. It had been a couple days since we got the evidence we needed. The following day Alex and I went to the authorities and gave them all of them information they needed.

Phillip and Amelia's citizenship case was now in the process of officially being completed. Alexander made sure of that. He presented all the necessary papers and the evidence that it was stolen. I questioned how he got them to process it so fast, but he just cockily bragged about how people don't say *no* to him. To which I rolled my eyes...

All of Dimitri's accounts have been frozen, but he doesn't know that yet since they just did it a few minutes ago. There's nowhere for him to go now.

I heard a *ding* and my eyes immediately snapped up to the doors. They opened and revealed Dimitri... *and* my mother.

What in the world is she doing here?

They walked over to me, Dimitri scowling all the way.

"Where is he?" Dimitri demanded.

"Office," I got up and walked over to the doors, softly knocking before peaking my head in. "Dimitri's here." I said with a small smile.

Alexander nodded, smirking. "Send him in."

I turned back toward Dimitri and opened the door fully. "He's ready to see you."

Dimitri rolled his eyes and sauntered in, Diana hot on his heels. I didn't stop her when she went in with him. Maybe he finally told her everything or maybe she'd finally realize how horrible of a man he truly is.

I followed behind and shut the doors behind us to make sure he wasn't able to turn back around to leave. At first he didn't seem to noice the officers standing to the side, but when he did...

"What the hells going on?" Dimitri asked, his voice a mixture of things. Frustration... anger... *panic.*

Alexander smirked, I knew he was enjoying this. Like a kid in a candy shop. "Why don't you have a seat, Mr. Sterling?" He tauntingly asked.

Dimitri didn't move. I could see him looking between him and the officers over to the side.

"Dimitri, what's going on?" My mother asked, she was trying to keep her voice quiet, but I was close enough to here.

"Dimitri Sterling you are under arrest for extortion, embezzlement, fraud, and theft." The FBI agent said as he came closer with the female cop by his side.

Dimitri stepped back. "What are you talking about? You have no proof—"

"We do." Alexander spoke up, catching his attention. "Care to take a look at these?" He handed out papers that were the printed copies of the pictures I took.

Dimitri visibly gulped as he snatched the papers form his hand. "*This* is theft!" He declared. "That *bitch* went in my office and stole these." He growled out.

"What are they? Embezzlement? Theft? Dimitri what is going on?" My mother questioned, looking around at all of us for some type of answer.

"He was using you." I said from over here by the door.

She turned to look at me with furrowed eyebrows. "You don't know what you're saying."

"Your husband has been using your name for accounts to hold money that he gained illegally." One of the officers explained.

Her face nearly drained of all the color as she looked back to her husband. "Dimitri?"

"Don't listen to them." He said to her. Lying straight to her face. "They don't have proof of anything."

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. The proof was literally right in front of them.

"We do have proof and the actual copies with *your* signature on each paper. A warrant was made to search your house right after you left." The agent explained. With that the other cop detained Dimitri in hand cuffs.

"You'll fucking pay for this, Knight!" He threatened as he was escorted out by the officers.

My mother pathetically followed out with them in tears. I wish we had a better relationship. I'd do my best to comfort her and make sure she's alright. If things were different maybe she wouldn't have stayed with someone so awful.

"We did it." A victorious grin took over Alexander's face. He walked around his desk and over to me, pulling me into his arms.

I wrapped my arms around his neck. "It's all over. Did you tell your dad?"

He nodded, still smiling down. "I did."

"And?"

"And... we have to go over there tonight for a celebration dinner." He chuckled.

I stood on my tip toes to kiss him quickly. Well I thought it'd be quick. One hand remained on my waist while the other reached to cup my face gently. He trailed kisses down from my lips all the way down to my collar bone, nipping at the spot he loved to tease me with. "I want you." He said huskily.

I pulled back slightly with and arched brow. "We're at work, Alex."

He smirked and shrugged. "I don't think the boss will mind."

I laughed. "You have to stop using that as an excuse."

"Is it working?"

I bit my lip. "A little bit." I admitted.

"Then I won't stop using that as an excuse." His lips landed on mine once again. Without breaking the kiss, he bent down slightly to grab the back of my knees, swiftly lifting me up.

I wrapped my legs around him as he carried me, putting me

down on the desk. "Alex..." I said half with a warning half moaning.

He kissed the base of my neck once more before he hovered over my face. "You're so beautiful, baby." He kissed the corner of my mouth teasingly. "I'll never get enough of you." His words alone were enough to send me in a frenzy.

"I love you." I breathed out as he went back to his relentless kisses on my neck.

I could feel his smile against my skin. "I'm going to take you on this desk right now." He nearly growled out.

My eyes went wide. "Alex, I don't think—"

His kiss silenced my concerns. "Don't be too loud and no one will know." *Oh Alexander.* He doesn't know what he does to me clearly. Or maybe he does and that's exactly why he's doing it.

~>~

"I can't believe we did that." I half laughed as I adjusted my blouse.

He smirked. "I can." His hands went to my hips as he brought me to him.

I rolled my eyes. "Down, boy. Your stamina is out of control."

He chuckled, kissing my cheek. "I can't help that my wife is hot and turns me on in the most inconvenient times."

I laughed. "Sure it's my fault. I'll make sure to wear a potato sack from now on so I don't *distract* you."

He nodded. "That'd be much appreciated it. Maybe a black one for the office?"

I shoved at his shoulder and he laughed. "Watch it."

He smiled down at me, his hand coming up to put a strand of hair behind my ear. "My beautiful Anastasia. How did I get so lucky?" He said, almost like it was to himself.

My heart stammered in my chest. "I love you." Was the only words I could manage to reply with. "You're my world Alex. I... can't imagine my life without you." I confessed a few moments later.

He leaned down to kiss me softly. "You were without a doubt the best business deal I've ever made." He half joked.

I laughed and shook my head. "I definitely agree."

He chuckled. "I love you, baby."

And I love you, Alexander Knight.

OMGGGG we're nearing TO THE END I CANT BELIEVE THIS! Only a couple more chapters to go. Please vote and comment below! Let's talk yeah? Love you guys!!

Chapter Thirty

Four months later...

I woke up suddenly, feeling completely nauseous. I moved Alex's arm from my waist and ran over to the bathroom, puking my brains out. *Must be the box of Girl Scout cookies I 'accidentally' ate...*

I flushed the toilet and got up, wiping my mouth. I stood up to brush my teeth. A soft knock came from the door before my shirtless husband came walking in, his eyes still heavy from sleep and his hair tousled all around. "Ana, are you alright?" His voice was husky.

I nodded and pushed my self off the sink I was leaning on. "Yeah. Ate too many cookies." I laughed lightly.

He nodded, yawning. "Come back to bed, baby."

I followed him back as we got into the bed together, he instantly pulled my to him as he spooked me, keeping me as close as possible. His soft snores continued and I knew he was asleep. It's nearly three am so we didn't have to be up for a few hours.

But I couldn't sleep.

So I laid there in his arms, looking out at the moon that was shining brightly through the window.

I couldn't help but think back about the past few months. Living with Alexander in his world was anything but normal.

After all that happened with Dimitri, his court date was set a couple months after. He ended up getting 129 years in prison. So life basically. My mother was shocked at what he had done, but ultimately decided not to take any legal action toward him. It's unfortunate how she still remained loyal. Her and Collin still live at the large mansion, forever living off of Dimitri's money. Well whatever's left. After all the fines he's facing I doubt it'll last them five years.

My father got better and has almost completed his treatment. He's at a healthy weight again and has began doing tasks on his own. They were thankfully able to let him out of the hospital and he's begun to take back his life. He has a while before he'll be fully healed, but he's on the right track.

I had to tell him about everything. *And boy did that go terrible.* He didn't speak to me for nearly a week, but eventually came around and accepted everything that happened. He was more hurt that we

didn't tell him, but ultimately grateful. I'd do this all over for him again if it meant he'd be healing. I know that if I hadn't taken the deal my dad most likely wouldn't be alive today.

Phillip and Amelia were officially granted citizenship and are now living freely with no threats over their heads. We celebrated that night and I'd never seen a family so happy. It's like a curse was lifted off of them.

Christmas was in six days and we were having it here at our place. Both sides of the family were coming and I was more than excited. I hadn't seen my parents since October and since dad can finally travel, they decided to come here.

After a few more hours of laying there with my own thought, I got up and went into the kitchen to make something to eat. I know I was sick earlier, but right now I could really go for some cereal. Or toast. Or eggs. All of it sounds good to be honest.

I rummaged around the kitchen until I found something I was satisfied with. I settled for the Cinnamon Toast Crunch I hide away in the back of the pantry so Alex doesn't find it.

I go and sit on the couch, clicking on the morning news. I mean there really isn't anything else to watch at six am anyway.

As I near the end of my cereal I start to feel queasy again. I put the bowl down on the coffee table and go into the bathroom off the living room.

I end up getting sick again and this time I have a feeling it's not just from the dozen cookies I ate.

I go into the living room quietly so I don't wake up Alex and get my phone. When I come back into the living room I dial the only person that can really confirm my suspicions.

~>~

I sit in the doctor's table, impatiently waiting my result. They were able to get me in right away and I took the appointment. I sent Alexander a text to let him know I was just running a few errands.

A few minutes later the doctor comes in with a small smile on her face. "Hi, Mrs. Knight. I have your results..."

I bit my lip, anxious to hear. "Okay..."

"Well you are in fact pregnant. Congratulations." She says with a wider smile.

My eyes went wide. *Pregnant.* A million things go through my mind. *Am I ready? Will I be a good mother? Will I be like my mother?* "Whoa." I breath out.

Images of how I would imagine our baby suddenly came to mind. If it's a boy, I'd definitely want him to look more like Alexander. Handsome like his father. *I just hope he won't be as hard headed.* But

if it's a girl, I hope she gets his eyes. They're beautiful.

"Are you alright, Mrs. Knight? Do you need some water?" The doctor asked, concerned.

I nodded. "I-I'm alright. Water would be great." I said with a small smile.

She nodded. "I'll be right back." She closed the door behind her and left me with the biggest news of my life.

Pregnant. I'm pregnant.

What will Alexander think? Does he even want kids? This was moving so fast and it's like it all caught up to me in this one moment. I love Alex and of course I wanted kids with him one day.

My hand immediately went over my stomach. A life was growing inside of me. One day this little person would be my whole world. I guess he or she already was. Ready or not, this baby was coming. I guess I shouldn't be surprised. Alex and I have been... reckless I guess you could say.

The doctor returned with a small cup of water. "Here you are."

I thanked her before taking the cup and drinking it. The cool liquid helped for sure. I also just needed a moment to process it all.

The doctor went on to further explain what the next steps would be. I'm seven weeks along, so in the first trimester. We'll need to do a follow up appointment within the next month, but should start prenatal care right away.

I finished up there and headed back home. Alexander wasn't there because he had a meeting today at work.

As soon as I got home I began pacing. How was I going to tell him? *Oh hey, Alex. How was your day? Oh by the way you knocked me up.*

Yeah I shouldn't say that.

The elevator opening made me jump. I turned to see Ronan and Scott walk in. They had driven me to the doctor's, but had no idea why. I of course wouldn't tell them. That'd be weird if they were the ones who knew first.

Alexander had actually grown to like Ronan. Of course he still thought he was occasionally flirting, but not so much anymore. Maybe it's because Ronan actually got engaged. I didn't even know he was dating someone until a month ago!

"Mrs. Knight, we have to do a security around the building check under Mr. Knight's orders. Ronan will be right outside the door if you need anything." Scott explained.

I nodded. "Thank you, Scott." They both walked out and back to the elevator.

Alexander had been extra protective lately since everything happened with Dimitri. The press got ahold of part of the story.

Basically the part where Dimitri was embezzling money. Regardless, the press were hounding me since I was his step daughter. My mother was basically in hiding at this point.

Also Alex was wary and worried that Dimitri would send someone back to hurt me for putting him behind bars. I guess I couldn't blame Alex for being too cautious. Dimitri was a mad man after all.

I decided to call Alexander. Maybe that would ease my nerves a little bit.

The phone dial tone only rang a couple times before he answered.

"Hi, baby. How are you?"

I smiled. "I'm good. How are you?"

"I'd be better if you were here. I keep thinking about you and my desk—"

"Alexander!" I scolded.

His musical laughter flooded my ears and I suddenly missed him. "What are you doing?"

"Waiting for you to get home." I laughed.

"Well your wish can be granted. I just have to finish a few things and then I'll be on my way back to you." *Always come back to me.*

"Okay, I'll see you soon then."

"Love you, Ana."

"I love you too."

~>~

An hour later Alexander came home handsome as ever in his navy blue fitted suit. *He was mouth watering.* It was taking all my self control not to jump his bones right there and then.

I clicked off the tv and got up from the couch. "Are you hungry?" *I am.* I walked over to the kitchen and could feel his presence as he followed me.

I opened the fridge and began looking through it for something to make sandwiches with. Suddenly his arms go around me and Alex nuzzles his nose in the crook of my neck.

I laugh light when he gently presses me sides, tickling me. "No, no, don't." I beg.

He chuckled and pressed a kiss on the base of my neck before turning me around in his arms. "I'm not hungry for food." He said, leaning down to kiss me.

I blush, even though I should be used to his filthy mind. "I need to tell you something." I blurt out.

He looks at me with sudden concern in his eyes. "What?"

I step out of his hold and shut the fridge. "Sit." I softly demand, pointing to the stool by the counter.

He arched a brow, but did as I asked. "Anastasia..." *oh now he's*

serious.

"I-I went to the doctor today."

That got him off the stool and he was almost immediately in front of me. "Are you alright?"

I laugh lightly as I nod. "Yes. Yes, I'm fine."

He lets out a breath. "Then why did you go to the doctors?"

I inhale, but don't exhale yet. I see the nervous look on his face and I bet my wasn't any different. "I'm pregnant." I breath out.

His face pales and I feel like the wind was just knocked out of me. "You're pregnant?"

I nod, biting my lip.

"Okay..." His eyes are still wide and he looks away from me, almost as if in shock.

"Okay?" I repeat.

He looked back up at me, his mouth agape. "I... I'm gonna be a dad."

I nodded. "Yeah. You are." I could feel the tears brimming in my eyes.

"Okay... okay." He just repeated.

I suddenly couldn't help it as they streamed down my face. I sniffled as I wiped them away.

"Baby, why are you crying?" His hands lifted to wipe away the tears.

"You're upset." I sobbed.

"What? No!" He pulled me into him and kissed the top of my head. "No, baby, no I'm not upset. Surprised, yeah, but not upset." He pulled back slightly to lift up my chin to look at him. "I'm sorry I was just so shocked... we're gonna have an actual baby. A tiny human!"

I laughed through my tears that were now slowly stopping. "I know. A tiny human."

He bent down to kiss my lips and then each of my cheeks. "I wouldn't want to do this with anyone else."

"That's reassuring." I joked.

He chuckled. "I love you, Ana, and this baby. You just gave me the greatest gift I could ever have."

I smiled at his words. "Merry early Christmas."

He laughed. "Some people get puppies, this year we're getting a baby."

I rolled my eyes. "Fun times over. Now we have to tell Norah."

He arched a brow. "That won't be fun?"

"Norah loves babies. She's probably never going to leave our house."

"Just another challenge we'll have to face."

"As long as I'm with you." I kissed him and was I complete bliss.

ONE MORE CHAPTER OH MY GOSH CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?! Thank you guys so much for reading, commenting, and voting! Your support means everything.

Chapter Thirty One

Guys I have the flu and I'm going to die.

Okay. Not really. But I feel like it. Being sick is the worst and I would really like it to just go away now.

But without further a do....

My eyes slowly opened as I woke up. The light was brighter than usual and when my vision completely cleared from sleep I saw that it was snowing. I sat up easier than usual and realized it's because Alexander's wasn't weighing me down like usual.

I looked around the room, but he wasn't there and the bathroom light was off so I assumed he must be out in the living room.

It was Christmas morning and my family along with Alex's would be here later for the dinner I was making.

Why did I agree to do this...

I got up from the bed and tried to pretend that my hair wasn't a terrifying sight. Alex wasn't in the living room, but the tree we put up was lit up with presents all under neath. I probably looked creepy smiling at our fake pine tree that was horrible decorated with rainbow lights, white lights, and various ornaments we had gotten from the store. Before this Christmas, Alexander never decorated for the holidays so therefore had no decorations.

I heard banging coming from the kitchen and string of curse words that followed. I quickly went to the kitchen where Alex was. He was at the stove attempting to cook.

The smell of burnt food filled the air along with the smoke from whatever he was cooking in that skillet.

"What are you doing?" I laughed.

He looked over to me with a scowl. "Trying to make a pancake."

I walked next to him and looked down at the burnt pancake that was nearly black. I looked back up at him with a small smile. "You're sweet, but don't cook again."

"I won't." He chuckled.

I stood on the tip of my toes to kiss him quickly. "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas, baby." He tried learning in for another kiss, but I turned on my heel to remake the batter to actually make pancakes.

After we finished breakfast we moved into the living room to

open gifts. He had bought me far too many things and I felt bad for three I only had gotten him. What do you get for the man that has everything?

Alex lifted the dress shirt I bought him that was gray.. He looked at me with an arched brow. "Are you trying to tell me something?"

I smirked. I was sick of seeing him in the same white button up shirt. "I don't know what you're talking about, babe."

He chuckled. "Thank you." He opened the rest of the gifts I had gotten him.

~>~

I pulled the ham out of the oven as the timer went off. Our families would be here any minute. I paced around getting everything together. Alex attempted to help, but he ended up dropping one of the pies so I banished him to cleaning duty.

He came sauntering back into the kitchen a while later with a frown on his handsome face. "I'm done." He said like a child who finished their chores.

I cracked a smile. "Not quite, babe. Did you make the bed?"

He arched a brow. "I thought I had a housekeeper."

I rolled my eyes. "It's Christmas. You can't expect her to be here *every day*. Now go, shoo," I waved my hand dismissively and he groaned, turning around to finish his task.

The plates were set, the dinner was done, and the house was clean. Now it was just time to wait for them to arrive. Knowing my family they'd be a few minutes late since being early wasn't a thing they did.

I go into our room and see it cleaned up. I was actually surprised at how well he did. I went over to the bathroom where he stood brushing his teeth.

I nudged my hip with his and he looked over me with what would be a smile if a tooth brush wasn't in his mouth. "How do you want to tell our parents?"

He arched his brow. "Hmm?" He said before spitting out the tooth paste.

I gave him a *look* and he seemed confused for a moment. "Oh!"

I smiled. "Yeah."

He smiled back at me and just shrugged. "Words might be useful when telling them."

I rolled my eyes. "Don't patronize me, Knight. It's their first grandchild."

He pulled my closer by my hips and I instinctively wrapped my arms around his neck. "However you decide will be perfect." He leaned down to kiss me and a moment later the bell that someone was coming up the elevator went off. "Better decide quickly."

I groaned and pulled away from him to go out to the living room. As I entered the doors opened and both our families poured out.

"Ana!" Julia shouted out before she basically ran into me, her arms circling around me.

"Hi, Jules." I hugged her back.

Alex came in and we greeted the rest of them together. His parents and Marcus were here along with my parents and Julia. I showed my parents around our home since I knew they'd want to see it.

"Here's the spare bedroom you guys will be staying in." I opened the door for them as they put their suitcases. "And Julia your room is right next to them."

"This place is like a fortress." Nora said, looking around the beautifully decorated room, stopping to look out the tall windows that show an incredible view of the city.

"I know." I said. There wasn't getting around how crazy this apartment was.

"He's good to you right?" Dad asked with a stern look.

I nodded, smiling. "The best,"

He scoffed playfully. "Not better than you're old man."

I laughed and went over to hug him. "No one could take that place.

It was so good having my dad almost back to normal. I missed him more than anyone. Now that he was finally getting healthy again I couldn't wait for things to go back to normal. Well not exactly quite how they were.

We went back downstairs and hoping the rest of them. A few minutes later we were sitting at the table eating our dinner I'm shocked I didn't mess up.

~>~

After dinner we all went over to the living room and talked for what seemed like hours. It was amazing to just be with all of them. I watched as Alex talked with my dad and our moms talked with each other. Even Marcus and Julia were getting along and sitting *very* close to each other.

I got up to grab another bottle of wine since they all seemed to polish off the other two pretty quickly. I opened the cabinet and when I turned around I jumped slightly from surprise when I saw Phillip come in. "Oh my gosh," my hand was over my heart. "you scared me."

"Sorry," he chuckled.

"It's okay. Did you need anything?" I asked as I looked around for the wine screw.

He shook his head. "I just wanted to come in here to talk to you."

He said, his French accent thick.

"Okay," I said. I finally found the wine screw and began to undo the cork.

"I wanted to tell you thank you, Anastasia. Amelia and I are forever grateful."

I stopped twisting and set the bottle aside. "I would do it again if it meant your family was safe." I said.

A small smile graced his face. The face that had so many similarities to my husband. "Alexander is very lucky and I wanted to make sure you know that. We all are. We couldn't have asked for a better daughter in law."

His words made my heart clench and I could feel the tears brimming in my eyes. I swear if I'm too happy, I'm crying. If I'm too sad, I'm crying. I need to be between a 3 and 7 on the emotional scale... "Thank you, Phillip. That means so much to me."

We were back in the living room after a few more minutes of talking and me having to clear my teary eyes.

I returned to my seat next to Alex and snuggled close as we sat back on the couch. His arm came around my shoulders as he held me close. "Are you alright?" He asked quietly, looking over at me.

I nodded. "More than alright." I smiled.

His eyebrows furrowed. "You were crying." His hand came up to caress my cheek.

"Your dad had me a little emotional in the kitchen." I chuckled. I grabbed his hand off my cheek and kissed the top of it. "Don't worry, I'm fine."

He nodded and leaned in to kiss my forehead. "Love you, baby."

~>~

By nine o clock every one was either too drunk to stay awake or too tired. My parents called it a night while Alex's did the same. Marcus wanted to take Julia around Central Park to see the lights. I'm still a little iffy about that, but I didn't want to start anything so I let it slide. Alex reassured that nothing would happen. Marcus might make stupid decisions sometimes, but he isn't an idiot. Well at least that's what Alex said.

I was cleaning up when I heard Alex call my name from the living room.

I came in to see him sitting in the couch. "Come over here." He said softly.

I did so and sat next to him on the couch, my eyebrows furrowed. "What?"

His smile made me feel like I had butterflies in my stomach. *He's so handsome.* "I have one more present for you."

I frowned. "No. You've already given me so much, Alex. I really

can't—"

He silenced me with a kiss and even when he pulled away I was still frowning. "It's for both of us."

I arched a brow. "What is it?"

He reached for the small box that had a ribbon tied around it. "Here,"

I took it and looked back up at him before he hurried me to open it. I slowly undid the bow and took the top of the box off. In it laid a small silver key. "A key."

He nodded. "To our house."

My head snapped back up at him. "House?"

He smirked and nodded again. "I bought it a couple months ago and have been renovating it. I know I should have asked—"

Now it was my turn to shut him up. I kissed him, holding his face with both hands. "I wanna see it."

"Tomorrow. It's outside of the city, but still not too far to commute." He explained.

I wrapped my arms around to hug him. He wrapped his arms around me and nuzzled his face in the crook of my neck, leaving a kiss to the base of it. "I love you, Alex. You and this baby are my world." I said. Then it dawned on me.

We never told our parents.

"Alex!" I said pulling away suddenly.

"What?" He asked, confused.

I laughed and he gave me another weird look. "We didn't tell our family."

He bursted our laughing. "Well there's always tomorrow."

Theres always tomorrow. And the next day. And the next day. I wanted to have so many days with Alexander. So many type of days. Every day I wanted to spend it with him whether it was a good or a tough day. There really couldn't be any *bad* days with him. Challenging, yes. But bad? Not a chance. I was excited to share and spend my life with him and the family we've started. What a life I've lived in only my twenty three years. I had everything I could ever ask for and more.

Alex grabbed onto my hand. "Let's go to bed."

I followed him into our room and we snuggled close to each other like we always did. His arm was around my waist as he spooked me, holding me extra tight tonight. I felt him place a kiss at the back of my head. "Good night. I love you, Ana."

I couldn't help but smile. "I love you." I said, completely content.

The End

ITS OVER! I can't believe it! Oh my gosh. I'm like a bag of

mixed emotions right now. Like. How. Am. I. Supposed. To. Feel.

Let me just say THANK YOU! Thank you for the countless comments, votes, and support you've given me by just simply reading. I appreciate you all so much and it was such a pleasure to write this story.

There's still an epilogue on the way so don't archive this story quite yet!

ALSO I have another story out right now that I'm working out called In His Arms. It's a romance/short story. Check it out!

Love you guys xxxx

Author's Note

If you guys didn't read the note at the end of the last chapter THERE WILL BE AN EPILOGUE. So many of you have asked so I'm just here to confirm that there will be one.

I'm currently in the process and am trying to write it.

That brings me to my next question...

What do YOU want to see in the epilogue? I know most of the time it's years down the road or maybe just even a few weeks. What would you prefer and what type of stuff do you wanna read about them doing?

PSA: Don't say you want a sex scene lolololol

Let me know in the comments!

Epilogue

Hello! Thank you guys for sticking with me during this writing journey. I am overwhelmed with the amount of support and love you guys have shared for this story. It means so much!

A couple things before you start. This is just a little FYI, but I know I'm always looking for new stories to read and that's why I update my reading lists so often in case other people are doing the same. I have over stories I have completed reading and they are all on my profile if you want to check them out!

Ok and ALSO after the epilogue I might be doing a few bonus scenes. What do you guys think?

Happy reading xx

Five years later...

I slowly lift my eyes open when I hear the door open. I see Alexander walk in with his suit still on. He's been on a business trip the last few days, but I wasn't excepting him to be coming home tonight.

I sit up gently, careful not to wake up the *two* sleeping four year olds next to me. Yes, we had twins. James and Scarlet.

It's dark, but the moon spilling in from the window allows me to see him coming over to me. He sits on the edge of the bed and leans to kiss me softly. "I didn't mean to wake you." He whispers.

I shrug. "It's okay. I didn't know you were coming home tonight."

"I ended the trip early. I hate being away from you guys." He said lovingly as he looks down at our children laying down on the other side of me.

They both took up his spot on the bed, sprawled out with Scarlet's hand nearly covering her brother's face. I smile in amusement at the sight. She got her sleeping habits from me for sure.

I always let them sleep with me in the bed when Alex is gone. They loved it and always referred to it as a *sleepover*.

Alex lifts his hand to undo his tie a bit. "I'll sleep in the guest room." He said, getting up.

"Wait," I said standing up. "I'll come with." I said.

He looked down at me and nodded, a small smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

I looked back one more time at our beautiful kids. I leaned down

to place a kiss on each of their heads. I gently moved Scarlet over more to my spot so that her brother wouldn't wake up from her basically attacking him in their sleep.

I left the door cracked as we left the room incase they woke up. We barely got out of the room before Alex's arms circled around me, pulling me close for a tight embrace. "I missed you." He said against the crook of my neck, breathing in.

I hugged him back, my cheek against his chest. "Yeah I'd miss me too." I joked. He chuckled and I pulled away to smile up at him. "I missed you too, babe." I leaned up to kiss him.

When I tried pulling away his hands cupped my cheeks to keep me there. His lips moved against mine and he deepen the kiss, slowly and tenderly moving his mouth against mine.

Suddenly he bent down to grab the back of my knees, carrying me as I wrapped my legs around him. He started walking and I realized we were in the other guest bedroom when he gently put me down on the bed, his body hovering over mine.

Alex broke the kiss to pepper kisses down my jaw, neck and collar bone. He lightly sucked on the sensitive skin at the base of my neck and I lightly pushed him away knowing exactly what he was planning to do. His face now hovered over mine with a mischievous flint in his eye and a smirk on his lips. "What?" He played innocent.

I narrowed my eyes at him. "No hickies."

He laughed. "Fine, but I want to talk to you about something." He leaned down to swiftly kiss my lips before settling beside me, laying on is side, facing me.

I mimicked his position. "What is it?"

Alex's arm reached out and rested on my hip as he gently traced circles on my exposed skin. I wasn't exactly in the most sexy outfit. Just one of his t shirts and a pair of yoga pants. "I think we should have another baby."

My eyes went wide and I sat up on my elbow. "Another one? Giving birth hurts." I groaned. I know Alex has been wanting another baby for a while. Well pretty much right after the twin's first birthday he's tried to convince me. It's not that I was completely against the idea, but two was already a lot to take care of.

"Why not? It's like the insurance baby."

I laughed and arched my brow. "Insurance baby?"

He smiled and nodded. "Yeah. That way if one of the twins is like a genius, the other won't feel so bad because they'll having another sibling like them."

My mouth fell open. "Alexander Knight, that's terrible reasoning

for another baby."

His smile turned into a closed mouth smirk. "Well then is me wanting you reason enough?" He moved in closer, kissing me neck again as he hovered over me once again.

"An insurance baby." I repeated. I mean. A third baby wouldn't be totally crazy. And I do love babies.

I felt him smile against my skin. "What do you say?" He pushes.

I look at him, debating if we should really take on another tiny human. "Well... we could try. We may not even get pregnant." I said.

Alex grinned widely before planting his lips down to mine.

Nine months later...

We did in fact get pregnant right away and I was now due any day. The twins were just as excited to have a little brother. Scarlet has been *practicing* holding a baby with her dolls and even went as far as trying to pick the names.

James also couldn't wait and asks questions every day. He asked me the other day if he was talking yet in my stomach... Alex found that hilarious. They were two pees in a pod. I wonder how this baby would look since James already resembles Alex so much.

Alex and I just dropped the twins off at Alex's parents house to stay for the weekend since the doctor said the baby is literally going to be here within the next two days. The twins love spending time with their grandparents anyway since Phillip and Amelia spoil them so much.

I groaned when I felt a tight feeling in my abdomen. I knew this was a common feeling when you're pregnant and unless they become very frequent, I shouldn't panic. But it's hard not to freak out over every little thing when you've got a human being growing in you. That's like not panicking when you see the check engine light on in a car.

"Are you alright?" Alex asked, concern written all over his face.

I kept my eyes closed and nodded, waiting for the cramping feeling to pass. A few minutes went by though and the tightness was still there. I groaned once again as it become more frequent.

We were on our way to dinner with some of our friends so of course now would be the time I'd get full on contractions.

"Alex, I—" I shrieked as Alex made a sharp u-turn. I already knew he was heading back to the hospital.

Soon we arrived and before I could even reach for the handle he was there opening my door and helping me out. I felt like a whale trying to get out of a freaking car.

I scrunched my face in pain. "It hurts," I breathed out.

Alex had his arm around me, holding most of my weight as he

nearly carried me into the hospital. He called out to the nurses standing by the desk and they immediately got a wheel chair.

Before I knew it I was going into full blown labor.

"Just focus on breathing, baby." Alex encouraged.

"If you tell me that one more time I will divorce you." I threatened through gritted teeth. Of course that threat is empty.

"You say the sweetest things." Alex said, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"I'm in so much pain, Alex." I said through short breaths. The doctor wanted to wait to give me any kind of medicine to take away the pain since I needed to dilate just a tad bit more.

"I'm so sorry, Ana. You're going to be alright." His hand reached out to push the hair that had fallen in my face away.

"This is all your fault."

"What?"

"*This!*" I gestures down to my mountain of a stomach.

He chuckled, at the moment pissing me off even more. "Takes two to tango, sweetheart."

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Six hours later our little boy was born. Elliot Knight. He was perfect and *very* chubby. A whole eleven pounds of baby I had to push out of me.

Soon after his parents came to the hospital with the kids so they could meet their new brother.

I held Elliot in my arms, looking down at his perfect little face. He resembled both me and Alex, I could tell right away.

"Mommy, I wanna see!" Scarlet said as her and James came rushing over to the side of the bed.

Alexander helped them both up as they sat on the side of the bed with me. I adjusted my arms so they could both see their new brother.

"Mommy, his cheeks are huge." James smiled as he lightly poked his brother's cheek.

"Be gentle," I said softly. James gave me a little smile before looking back down at his brother.

I felt Alex's arm go around my shoulders as he leaned in to kiss my temple. "I love you guys." He said looking at all of us.

"He's really beautiful." Amelia said as she stepped forward to get a better look at him.

"Wanna hold him?" I asked, already knowing that exactly what she wanted to do.

Amelia eagerly nodded as she lifted Elliot up and to her. Both her and Phillip cooed and awed at him lovingly.

"When are we gonna go home with him?" James asked excitedly.

"He can come home in two days." Alex explained.

Scarlet and James looked at each other both grinning. "He can play with our toys. I promise we'll share." She said.

"He's gonna play super hero's with me, right Mom?" James asked.

"He too little to play super hero's right now, James, but soon he definitely will." I promised.

The rest of the time was spent with my family was great and the twins really love their new brother which is all I could hope for. A few hours of being there had them wiped out so Alex's parents decided to bring them back home.

I was so lucky to have the support I did.

It was nearly ten o'clock and Elliot was sleeping in his bed next time mine. I looked over to Alex who was sitting on the couch nearly falling asleep.

"Alex, you need to go home and sleep. I'll be okay." I said to him. I knew that couch couldn't be comfortable. I slept on one just like it when my dad was in the hospital.

He shook his head, rubbing the side of his face. "I'm okay."

I sat up and scooted over to the edge of the bed. "Come here then." I patted the hospital bed.

The corner of his mouth lifted in a small smile. "If you insist." He said, getting up to walk over to me.

Alex laid down beside me, his arm draping over my waist as he spooned me. "I can't believe we have another baby." He said.

I chuckled. "Well believe it." I said, looking ahead at our baby in his bed. The clear walls gave me a view of his sleeping state. "He's going to be so handsome just like you." I said.

He pulled me a little closer, kissing the back of my head. "I love you, Ana."

"I love you." Was the last thing I said before sleep took over.

I can't believe it's over! I'm not crying. You are.

Oh my gosh! You guys are amazing! In the future I do plan on adding some bonus scenes so maybe holidays, the kids grown up, things like that.

ALSO I think I'm going to start a werewolf story and I'm pretty pumped about it.

Thanks again guys for all the support! Please vote!

Check It Out!

Guys! I've recently started two new stories that I would love for you to check out. They're both very different from each other because I just can't stick to one genre lol.

Lycans have always been a myth, a scary story to tell your kids. As time went on people began to fear them less and less because all they were now were an imaginary creature. That is until Lena came face to face with one.

And he calls her mate.

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I stood there, unmoving as he was slowly leaning in. My heart took over as I let him place his lips on mine. We both stood there as if we were frozen and unsure of what to do.

My brain finally caught on and my hand lifted to push at his chest, releasing his lips from mine. My eyes remained closed- I couldn't face him yet. "We shouldn't." I softly said. "I'm your best friend's sister." I tried to reason as if that were a reason at all.

I felt his hand caress my cheek and tuck a strand of hair behind my ear. "You're much more than that." With those words I placed my lips back onto his, never wanting this kiss to end.

Hello Again!

Hey hey hey so this obviously isn't a chapter because I ended the story lol BUT I do miss writing it!

OKAY BUT WHAY I ACTUALLY HAVE TO SAY... what would you guys think of a spin off story? Like about one of their kids?

Let me know what you think!
And if you like that idea then which kid?

Follow me for updates about this!

HELLLLOOOOO

Hey long time no see! Just a quick message to let you know the spin off is up! Perfect Secrets! Check it out ☺

Love you guys! Thanks for all the support you give. It means the world to me.